



FOREWORD BY KENNETH SAMPLES

CULTIC DOCTRINE

OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

1844

AN EVANGELICAL RESOURCE AND AN APPEAL TO ADVENTISTS

DALE RATZLAFF

What others are saying about Cultic Doctrine

PASTOR MARK MARTIN

CALVARY COMMUNITY CHURCH, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

If you have ever wondered what makes Seventh-day Adventism different from evangelical Christianity, you're holding in your hand the very best explanation I've ever seen. This book will affect and challenge Adventism for decades to come.

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EDITOR & RESEARCHER, WATCHMAN FELLOWSHIP

Ratzlaff's writing clearly possesses a spirit of meekness; it is nevertheless a tour de force. Patiently pursuing his subject, he lays out the evidence supporting an irresistible conclusion—Ellen White was not a true prophet or messenger from God, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not what it claims to be, the only true "remnant church." If Adventist leadership will heed his plea, then perhaps their church is salvageable. If not, then it is time for evangelicals everywhere to say to the Christians within Adventism, with neither malice nor exultation, but with one united and very earnest voice, "Babylon is fallen! Come out of her, my people!"

PASTOR ERNESTO ALERS-MARTIN

SPANISH BETHEL CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ALLIANCE CHURCH, MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Of all the books I have read on Seventh-day Adventism, this is the most in-depth, yet readable examination of SDA's 1844 investigative judgment doctrine. The analysis of this doctrine is formidable. From the historical point of view, the book is well documented and unbiased with the facts clearly laid out before the reader to evaluate. The biblical evidence is also convincing. The way Mr. Ratzlaff analyzes the main points of SDA doctrine and confronts SDAs with Bible truth is superb. I congratulate Mr. Ratzlaff for this wonderful work.

KENNETH R. SAMPLES

PRESIDENT, AUGUSTINE FELLOWSHIP

I agree with Mr. Ratzlaff that the doctrine of the investigative judgment is antithetical to the biblical gospel.... I hope that many Seventh-day Adventists will read Dale Ratzlaff's book and think through the issues he raises. The Seventh-day Adventist pioneers made some bold claims. I hope that the present-day Seventh-day Adventist church will come to grips once and for all with the theological implication of those claims.

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the
CULTIC
Doctrine

of
Seventh-day Adventists

- *An Evangelical Resource*
- *An Appeal to SDA Leadership*

Dale Ratzlaff

About the Author

Dale Ratzlaff was a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) and was educated in SDA schools from first grade through seminary. He pastored in the Adventist church for 13 years, seven of these years as a Bible teacher at Monterey Bay Academy, La Selva Beach, California.

In the 1980s, while nearing the end of his doctoral program at Andrews University, Dale Ratzlaff did an in-depth study of the SDA doctrine of the Investigative Judgment and Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary, which Adventists teach started in 1844. He became convinced that this doctrine could not be supported by Scripture, was contrary to clear biblical teaching, and undermined the new covenant gospel of grace. As he could no longer teach this doctrine in clear conscience, Dale Ratzlaff and his wife, Carolyn, left the SDA denomination.

About two years after leaving the SDA church. Dale Ratzlaff lead a group of Christians in a seven-month inductive Bible study of the Sabbath. He continued studying the topic of the gospel, the covenants and the Sabbath and published *Sabbath in Crisis* in 1990. This book went through four printings and has been replaced by the revised and enlarged, *Sabbath in Christ*.

Dale Ratzlaff is also the author of *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventist "Truth"*, now available in both English and Spanish. He is president of Life Assurance Ministries, Inc. and editor of the by-monthly journal, *Proclamation!*, which is targeted to former and inquiring Seventh-day Adventists, as well as other sabbatarian groups.

The Ratzlaffs live in Peoria, Arizona have two married sons, Bruce and Mike, and four grandchildren.

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Dale Ratzlaff

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Dedication



To my wife, Carolyn, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for her willingness to follow truth as we understand it, for the countless hours she spent reading the many versions of this manuscript, and for her numerous helpful suggestions for its improvement.



Foreword

Following in the footsteps of my friend and colleague Walter R. Martin, my writings have endeavored to give Seventh-day Adventism a fair hearing in the evangelical ranks. I have long recognized the broad theological diversity present within contemporary Adventism: traditional, evangelical, liberal, cultural, etc. I have also argued that Seventh-day Adventism as a broad church body should not be viewed as a non-Christian cult or heretical sect such as Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormonism. However, I am also painfully aware that there exists a cultic branch of Seventh-day Adventism that seeks to trace its identity to the Adventist pioneers of the nineteenth century. Dale Ratzlaff identifies and confronts this cultic face of Adventism in his interesting and provocative book, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*. While I am not in complete agreement with Mr. Ratzlaff's overall assessment of Seventh-day Adventism, I do think that he has provided a penetrating analysis of some of Seventh-day Adventism's most distinctive early

doctrines—and their unfortunate implications in the present-day church.

The Seventh-day Adventist pioneers made some very bold claims. They claimed to be “a special people, with a special message, for a special time!” They claimed to be the “remnant church” that uniquely kept the commandments of God. They also claimed to have special divine guidance through an inspired prophet in their midst—Ellen G. White. Upon closer historical examination, however, we find that the beliefs that coalesced to form primitive Seventh-day Adventism in the wake of the failed Millerite movement were far from biblically orthodox. The beliefs of the primitive Adventist movement included: a non-trinitarian view of God, a semi-arian christology, a semi-pelagian gospel, a message of restoration, a strongly legalistic piety, an identity rooted in speculative eschatology (rather than the gospel), and an unsophisticated and unreliable hermeneutic. In point of fact, the primitive Adventist movement was a theologically cultic movement.

Of course this is only the beginning of the Adventist movement. Clearly Seventh-day Adventism has evolved theologically over the years and has corrected many of the early doctrinal errors. In fact, Ellen G. White seemed to play a significant role in helping the Adventist church move toward theological orthodoxy (acceptance of the trinity, an orthodox view of Christ, etc.). However, as Dale Ratzlaff points out in his book, some of the distinctive Adventist beliefs that were originated by its pioneers still plague the contemporary church—especially the traditionalist wing of the church. Doctrines such as the sanctuary and investigative judgment as historically set forth by Seventh-day Adventism have no sound biblical foundation (as many contemporary Adventist scholars have pointed out). These doctrines are tied uniquely to the alleged authoritative

writings of Ellen G. White. Without her prophetic imprimatur on these doctrines, as on the early Adventist movement as a whole, they would have no foundation whatsoever.

I agree with Mr. Ratzlaff that the doctrine of the investigative judgment is antithetical to the biblical gospel. It seems to be clearly incompatible with the doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, on the account of Christ alone. The investigative judgment seems to rob Adventists of the assurance of their salvation by wrongly emphasizing a person's individual works of obedience, rather than properly emphasizing the righteousness of Christ Himself, which has been imputed to the believer and received through faith alone (Rom. 3:23–24). Our standing before God rests completely in the imputed, alien righteousness of Jesus Christ.

I hope that many Seventh-day Adventists will read Dale Ratzlaff's book and think through the issues he raises. The Seventh-day Adventist pioneers made some bold claims. I hope that the present-day Seventh-day Adventist church will come to grips once and for all with the theological implication of those claims.

Kenneth Richard Samples



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Preface

My wife, Carolyn, and I were both fourth generation Seventh-day Adventists. We still have many sacred memories of life and service in the SDA church—and we always will. I served as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor for 13 for years, seven of which were at Monterey Bay Academy where I taught Bible. Carolyn and I were both conservative Seventh-day Adventists and believed the Adventist message. We both accepted the writings of Ellen G. White as inspired and authoritative. We were nurtured in the Adventist theology, tradition, culture, and dream.

We left the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1981 because we could no longer, in clear conscience, teach the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. Since that time many of our SDA friends ask us, “Why did you leave?” My answer has been, “We studied our way out.” This answer is completely incomprehensible to most Seventh-day Adventists. They—as we did—believe that Seventh-day Adventists have “the truth,” a special message given by God for the last days. How, then, they reason, can one study himself out of the truth without leaving truth and accepting error?

It is hoped that this book will clearly explain why Carolyn and I are no longer Seventh-day Adventists. There are also three other reasons why this book was written. These will be given in the first chapter.

My real desire, hope, and prayer, is that the Seventh-day Adventist Church would candidly admit the doctrinal errors to which this book is devoted, and continue to move toward mainstream evangelicalism. Who could study their way out of a church founded on Scripture *alone* with the new covenant gospel of grace *central* to *all* its teachings?

I thank the many people who read the early drafts of this book. They made many helpful suggestions and contributed additional supporting evidence. Most of these people were Seventh-day Adventists and wish to remain anonymous and I will honor their request.

I believe that truth needs no other foundation than honest investigation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a willingness to follow truth when it is revealed. When you, the reader, have considered all the evidence presented in this book, it is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will guide you to a correct conclusion. I believe He will.

I also make a humble appeal to the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Please read this book. I believe there is a great future for the SDA church, providing it frees itself from known error. Carefully consider the evidence in this book. May God guide you into truth.

Dale Ratzlaff
Peoria, Arizona
May, 2003

Chapter 1



Sliver in the Foot

When I pick up a book dealing with a biblical or theological topic I am very frustrated if there are too many stories. I want to get to the facts; never mind the stories. They can wait for later! Yet, here I am starting a book of this nature with a story. Please read it. It is a true story about my experience which parallels, in a surprising way, what I perceive to be the message of this book.

It happened on a wood floor in an old country house about ten miles from Bolton, North Carolina. My older sister, Opal, and I were playing barefoot in the house. She was chasing me from room to room when suddenly I yelled out with pain and fell down crying. (Ten year old boys still cry when they are hurt badly enough.) It felt as though a red hot needle had entered the ball of my left foot behind the

big toe. Only a red spot was visible, but judging by the pain I was sure there was a sliver in my foot. My mother poked around the red spot with a needle, but was unable to find anything. She tried to assure me that there was no sliver in my foot. However, my foot hurt so badly that she finally took me to the nearest doctor which was about twenty miles away.

The doctor, an older man, looked at my foot and said he did not see any sliver. However, I insisted that there was a sliver in my foot and I could feel its pain. He then sprayed my foot with something he said would make my foot so cold his knife would not hurt. After my foot was “frozen” he took out his knife and started cutting. He told me it would not hurt, but it did. He tried to tell my mother that he really was not hurting me, but he was. I shrieked and howled and pulled back at the pain of the knife until he finally gave up and said there was no sliver in my foot. He said a sliver had entered my foot and had probably come out again. This time I believed him, but my foot kept hurting.

Sometimes my foot did not hurt. At other times, there was a sharp, burning, stabbing pain. Often I would look at my foot to see if I could find a sliver. By this time, however, all I could see was where the doctor had cut. Weeks went by. It seemed at times to be better and at other times worse. When I moved my foot just right, there was that old, sharp, burning, stabbing pain.

Weeks turned into months. Months turned into years. Our family now lived in California. Sometimes I was able to run without pain; at other times my foot would hurt. There were long periods of time when I would not be bothered with pain at all. But every now and then, there was that old, familiar pain. Finally, after several years, my foot did not seem to bother me any more at all. However, some

time after this I noticed the top of my foot would hurt and I could not lace my shoe tightly without pain. I remember cutting my shoe to keep my foot from hurting.

Seven years had gone by since that day when Opal chased me in the old, wood-floored, country house in North Carolina. I was in a boarding high school, and noticed the spot on top of my foot getting red, and there seemed to be a hard lump under the skin. I showed this to the school nurse and she took me to the doctor. The doctor decided to cut out the lump. This time the doctor used an anesthetic that worked. After cutting for about an hour, he finally separated the entangled lump from my foot. Inside the lump we found a sliver one and seven-sixteenths inches long! It had been there for seven years.

With the sliver removed, my foot soon got well. I started running for fun—no more pain! Not long after that, I entered in school competition for the mile run. I came in first!

In a similar way, the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church has been plagued by what I am calling a “sliver”—the doctrine of “the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.”¹ (Evangelical readers please see footnote.) Many sincere men have tried to extricate this sliver to no avail. Often, the very ones who have tried to do this have been rebuffed, ridiculed, and relieved of their ministry and church membership. Like the old country doctor, the officials of the church have declared, time after time, that no sliver even exists. And the church has learned to live with the problem. Sometimes years have gone by

¹ For an understanding of this doctrine, evangelical readers may want to skip ahead to Chapter 9 which is devoted to this topic, and then come back and pick up again at this point. Other than this one exception, it is recommended that all chapters be read in consecutive order.

with no symptoms. Then, for one reason or another, the pain manifests itself again. This has been a recurring pattern throughout the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church. What this church could have been without this sliver, and several other related doctrines, will never be known.² However, it is my belief that if this sliver were extracted from the Seventh-day Adventist church, it, too, would be able to run without pain. Oh, the process of removing the sliver would be very painful, and much associated, encased tradition would have to be removed with it. But soon thereafter, I believe the SDA church would be setting new goals and reaching them free from the pain of the crippling sliver.

Having been a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist, I benefited from all the good things that are in the SDA church—and there are many. My purpose in this book is to help, not hinder the SDA church. I continue to have, and always will have, many happy memories of life and ministry within the SDA church. For this reason, I hope this book in some small way will help to remove the sliver so that true health can come to this body.

At times this task will be painful as errors are exposed. This may be especially true for Adventists who do not know some of the facts about the history of the SDA movement. It may be difficult for some Historic Adventists³ to accept the facts, as serious evaluation of this sliver is made in the light of Scripture, history, theology, experience, and ethics. I well remember the pain I suffered in learning these things. However, it will serve no lasting

² Some Historic Adventists might justly argue that were it not for the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment there would be no Seventh-day Adventist church.

³ This term will be defined later in this chapter.

purpose to gloss over the facts. Rather, the cut must be deep enough to remove the sliver which has been so well encased in time and tradition. It is my conviction that truth needs no other foundation than honest investigation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and a willingness to follow truth when it is revealed. Knowing and following the truth, as painful as the process may be, will bring real joy and freedom in the end. Was it not Jesus who said “the truth shall set you free”?⁴

I would like to be able to focus only on the sliver. However, like the sliver in my foot, which was set so deep and had been there so long that its removal required cutting out the tissue in which it was embedded, so the removal of this doctrine will require cutting out a mass of theological tradition with which it is entangled. I had originally hoped to deal with the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment alone, without confronting the writings and ministry of Ellen G. White⁵ (EGW). However, after my study I found this to be impossible. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, *as a continuing doctrine*, is the legacy of Ellen White and no one else. True, others invented it, supported it, and explained it, but she cemented it into the foundation of Adventism as an immovable “truth.” The whole SDA movement rests upon the integrity of October 22, 1844, being the fulfillment of Daniel 8:14, which Adventists teach to be the beginning of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

⁴ Jn. 8:32.

⁵ Ellen G. White is considered by Seventh-day Adventists to have manifested the true gift of prophecy, and her writings are held to be a continuing and authoritative *source* of truth. They are sometimes called “an inspired commentary” on the Bible.

What actually happened on that day has been the center of Adventist debate and reinterpretation since October 23, 1844, to this very day.

To remove the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment doctrine from SDA theology will bring into question the inspiration and authority of the writings of Ellen White, and the integrity of the whole Adventist movement. Some feel that instead of calling the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment doctrine a sliver it should be called the “supporting beam.”⁶

This book will focus on the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment and its related teachings. It should not be inferred that the whole of SDA teaching or ministry is wrong. It is not. I was saved while an Adventist and many others have been saved in Adventism as well. The Seventh-day Adventist church has *much* which deserves praise. Its emphasis on education, health, medical work, giving, foreign missions, and community are often a model for other churches to follow. It should also be said that Ellen White was instrumental in supporting, encouraging, and even starting, many of the good things of Adventism.

Why I am writing this book

In 1981 I was forced to choose between promising to teach all twenty-seven doctrines in the *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, or resign from the ministry. I chose to resign. That was fifteen years ago. Why should I write now?

⁶ Comments from both Adventist and former Adventist pastors who read the first draft of this book.

Several years after I left the SDA church, I was told by my SDA pastor friends that the church had moved away from its hard-line stance on teaching the historic Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. Recently, however, three things have occurred that motivated me to write this book.

First, in 1990 I wrote *Sabbath in Crisis*,⁷ which is a thorough, yet easy to read, biblical study of the gospel, the Sabbath, and the covenants. Well over ten thousand copies of this book are now in circulation, and I receive many calls and letters from evangelical pastors and other Christians requesting information on SDAs. I hope this second book will serve as a useful tool to this end.

Second, what I perceived to be a shift within the SDA church away from what I considered to be its hard-line stance on the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, has recently changed direction. At the official level of the church there appears to be a swing back in emphasizing the teachings of this doctrine. This is evidenced by a number of books that have recently come off SDA denominational presses. This has been done even though many SDA scholars know this doctrine is without biblical support.

Third, and perhaps most significant in my thinking, the Seventh-day Adventist community has now published two of its own Bibles. One is *The Study Bible*, a large King James Bible which has references to Ellen White's comments in the margins and her quotations at the bottom of the pages. True, there are many other study Bibles today,

⁷ The fourth printing of *Sabbath in Crisis* is now (2003) depleted and has been replaced with *Sabbath in Christ* which is a major revision of the original work including five new chapters with a total of 438 pages.

however, comments in the preface to this Bible deserve special attention. The second is *The Clear Word Bible*, a paraphrase which has sold well in SDA circles. Both of these Bibles and the use made of them will be evaluated in later chapters.

The scope of this book is limited. While there are other doctrines held by the SDA church that many evangelicals would consider to be false,⁸ this book will address what I consider to be SDA's fundamental problem: the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. This study will, however, also evaluate the appropriateness of SDAs holding the writings of Ellen White as "a continuing and authoritative source of truth" in their doctrinal statement.⁹

This book will also be limited in depth. There is so much that could be written on the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment¹⁰ that the average reader would get lost following rabbit trails

⁸ Many evangelicals would consider the SDA doctrines of "The Great Controversy" (No. 8), "The Remnant and Its Mission" (No. 12), "The Gift of Prophecy" (No. 17), "The Sabbath" (No. 19), "Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary" (No. 24), and perhaps a few others which teach soul sleep and conditional immortality (25), and annihilationism (26), all to be (at least partly) erroneous. The numbers in the parenthesis refer to the numbers as listed in the *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, all of which are listed in Appendix A. Of these, I believe the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment in No. 24, is the most pernicious because it undermines the gospel.

⁹ See *Fundamental Beliefs* No. 17, "The Gift of Prophecy" in Appendix A.

¹⁰ Desmond Ford, for example, wrote nearly 1000 pages in his "Glacier View Manuscript" and his published book, *Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment*, has about 750 pages on this topic, not to mention the many other books dedicated to this doctrine.

through the dense jungle of denominational history and jargon. This doctrine was the foundational pillar in the development of Adventism and continues to hold theological importance. Therefore, it will be impossible to give even a cursory examination of all the historical and theological “tissue” to which it is connected. I have tried to distill the important facts, listing at least one reliable source for support when often many sources could be cited.

Definitions

Who are “true” Adventists?

The answer to this questions is not an easy one. Within the Seventh-day Adventist church there are three streams of theological understanding.¹¹ While the following descriptions are an oversimplification, and many Seventh-day Adventists would not precisely fit any of these categories, they will serve for purposes of communication. The three main branches of Adventist theological understanding we will call: Historic Adventism,¹² Liberal Adventism, and Evangelical Adventism.

Historic Adventists

Historic Adventists continue to hold to the “unique truths” that were “given” to Adventism. They believe that the SDA church was raised up by God to proclaim a special message to the world. This unique message is the three angels’ messages taken from Revelation 14:6–12. This is a judgment hour proclamation of the “eternal gospel;” a warning to come out of “Babylon,” which they believe to

¹¹ See the journal, *Adventist Today*, January/February 1994.

¹² Some would call this group Traditional Adventism.

be the “fallen” Protestant churches of Christendom;¹³ and a warning against the reception of the mark of the beast. The Sabbath for them is the seal of God, and Sunday worship, they believe, will become the mark of the beast. Therefore, the seventh-day Sabbath holds a place of vital importance in their thinking and message. They see the hand of God moving in SDA history as the light of God’s “truth” for the last days keeps unfolding before their view. Historic Adventists believe that the writings of Ellen G. White are “a continuing and authoritative source of truth.” They believe Ellen White was a messenger of God, and her writings are often considered an “inspired commentary” on Scripture. Very few “good Adventists”¹⁴ would ever admit that Ellen White’s writings contradict the Bible, or contain serious theological error. This group strongly supports the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

Liberal Adventists

Within Adventist circles Liberal Adventism is often used to describe those who hold the “moral influence theory” of the atonement. This stream finds its center in the Loma Linda area of Southern California. It teaches that the substitutionary, forensic view of the atonement is primitive and does not correctly represent the character of God. Liberal Adventists would say that the forensic view of the atonement served its purpose in Bible times, but is inadequate today. Paul taught this view because it was a framework the people of his day could understand. Modern

¹³ Those who teach the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness and/or reject the “truth” of the Seventh-day Sabbath.

¹⁴ A term often used by Historic Adventists to refer to those who observe all the lifestyle rules laid down by Ellen White.

Christians, however, have progressed in their understanding of the character of God to the place where the sandbox models are no longer adequate. To picture God requiring a blood atonement, they would say, is to see Him in barbaric terms. The forensic model of the atonement is no longer valid.

Rather, Liberal Adventists teach that salvation is to *know God*.¹⁵ Their emphasis is on understanding the character of God. The cross of Christ, they say, proves that men could do whatever they wanted to the Son of God, and He would love them still. In other words, there is no reason to be afraid of God. Knowing His character engenders trust, and this trust in God is really what God is looking for. When we truly trust God enough, then we are “safe to save.” One recurring theme of the Liberal Adventists is that God is not going to punish the wicked. They revolt at the very idea of a painful destruction of the wicked, to say nothing of an ever-burning hell. Communicating to others the loving character of God is to them the proclamation of the gospel. Often, these Liberal Adventists use the writings of Ellen White—at least portions of them—to support this theology.¹⁶

Evangelical Adventists

Evangelical Adventists are more gospel-centered than either Historic Adventists or Liberal Adventists. In fact most Evangelical Adventists do not believe in a literal interpretation of several points in the *Fundamental Beliefs*

¹⁵ “And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” John 17:3.

¹⁶ This description is a summary of my personal talks with those who are considered Liberal Adventists. See also *Adventist Today*, January/February 1994.

of Seventh Day Adventists. Evangelical Adventists do not believe SDA's will be the only people saved in the last days. They do not see the Seventh-day Adventist church as the only true remnant church. And most importantly, Evangelical Adventists believe in the gospel of grace. Justification by faith is their keynote. Good works will follow the genuine experience of faith in Christ, but these works do not enter into the foundation for salvation.

Evangelical Adventists are in disagreement in their understanding of Ellen White. Some continue to believe that Ellen White demonstrated the true gift of prophecy, while at the same time disagree with many of her statements. Others, at least in private, reject her writings as an inspired source of truth.

Most Evangelical Adventists do not believe that all true Christians must, or will, observe the seventh-day Sabbath. Some still see the seventh-day Sabbath as important, but non-essential; others hold that the old covenant Sabbath prefigured the true "rest" of grace revealed in the gospel.¹⁷ This latter group is gaining influence at the grass-root level within the SDA church and poses a serious threat to Historic Adventism.

A possible fourth group within Adventism

Some have said that there are four groups within the Adventist church, and have defined the fourth group as those who don't care about the issues and don't want to get involved in the discussion of them. They just want to keep

¹⁷ The information cited here comes from recent (1994–1996) personal conversations with Evangelical SDA pastors who wish to remain anonymous.

peace. This fourth group would be called Social, Cultural or Progressive Adventists.¹⁸

Fuzzy lines of demarcation

We should not think that the lines between these groups within the SDA church are always clear and distinct. I was born into a Historic Adventist home and fully believed the Adventist teachings. After I discovered the gospel,¹⁹ my progress in moving from a Historic Adventist, to an Evangelical Adventist, and finally to a non-Adventist, was in small, incremental steps. From my recent conversations with other Adventists at various stages of the journey, I see the same thing taking place.

Sources

Most of the facts brought out in this book are from Seventh-day Adventist or ex-SDA sources. I wish to give special credit to the following four people whose works proved invaluable to this study. Dr. Desmond Ford²⁰ has gathered together many of the early Adventist documents which would otherwise be difficult to find. His research and analysis of the many facets of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is monumental.

Dr. Kai Arasola²¹ has analyzed William Miller's²² methods of Bible study and his resulting conclusions. Arasola's

¹⁸ See *Adventist Today*, January/February 1994.

¹⁹ I did not learn the clarity of the gospel from Adventist sources.

²⁰ Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment*, (7955 Bullard Drive, Newcastle, CA 95658: Desmond Ford Publications, 1980).

²¹ Kai Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, (Sigtuna, Sweden: Datem Publishing, 1990).

²² William Miller is considered the father of the second advent movement, and in that sense, the father of the SDA church. He

book also contains a reprint of Miller's "Fifteen Proofs" which supported his belief that Christ was coming in 1843.²³ Too often, at least in SDA circles, William Miller has been held up as a revered, esteemed figure and has not been evaluated according to the facts of his methods and message.

George R. Knight's work²⁴ proved helpful because it is a compilation of reproductions of many early Adventist documents. It is especially useful to SDA readers because it is printed by a denominationally-owned press and therefore serves as a trustworthy source for Adventist readers who might otherwise question some of the facts referred to in this book.

D. M. Canright published a well-documented book on Ellen White in 1919.²⁵ He was a contemporary of Ellen White and many of the Adventist pioneers. He was at one time a strong believer in the SDA message and the inspiration of EGW. The information in this book fills in many of the blank spots missing in commonly known SDA history, and gives some of the rationale for certain historical events and changes in SDA theology.

Conventions used in this book

All Bible quotations are taken from *The New American Standard Bible* unless otherwise noted. At times I have

predicted Christ would come in 1843. Some of his interpretations and conclusions became the cornerstone of SDA theology.

²³ Which were later changed to support Christ's coming in 1844.

²⁴ George R. Knight, *1844 and the Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1994).

²⁵ D. M. Canright, *Life of Mrs. E. G. White, Seventh-day Adventist Prophet, Her False Claims Refuted*, (The Standard Publishing company, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1919). This book has been reprinted and is now available through Life Assurance Ministries Publications.

emphasized a particular word or phrase by putting it in *italics*. These are my emphases unless otherwise noted. I have used these liberally, especially in quotations, to help the reader quickly grasp important words and concepts. Sometimes I have added a word or phrase within a quotation to help the reader grasp its setting. Words added within a quotation will always be enclosed in brackets. At the end of most chapters I have summarized what I consider to be the pertinent facts delineated within that chapter.

I trust this book will be a blessing to the evangelical community and, in some small way, to the SDA church as well.

Test
the spirits
to see whether
they are from God;
because many
false prophets
have gone out
into the
world

Chapter 2



How Dare You?

It is impossible to do an evaluation of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment without, at the same time, evaluating the writings of Ellen G. White. We will soon see that the two cannot be separated. This, however, will raise major questions in the minds of many SDA readers. They will ask of me, “Who do you think you are? Who set you up to pass judgment on the ‘Lord’s messenger’? Why should I even read this book? I know Ellen White supports the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment and I trust her to be the Lord’s messenger; why should I disregard what she has written and believe you? Are your credentials better than hers? Do you claim to be a prophet? Have you had visions from the Lord? Have you talked with

angels and has God shown you the future, as was the case with Ellen White?"

These are vitally important questions, not only for SDAs, but also for the evangelical reader. Actually, there are three questions that must be addressed at the very outset: (1) What is our ultimate source of authority? (2) Should we evaluate the writings of one who alleges to have been the Lord's messenger, professes to have had visions from God, claims inspiration, and purports to write with the authority of God? If so, upon what basis? (3) What is truth?

What is your ultimate source of authority?

The first issue is authority. This must be settled in the mind of the reader once and for all. If we do not agree here, there is no further dialogue. What is the final authority for the Christian? Evangelicals will immediately answer, "The Bible and the Bible only." Most SDAs will give the same answer. However, with SDAs, the answer does not necessarily mean the same to them as it does to the evangelical reader. Let me explain.

For example, point number one in the *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists* states:

The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history.

However, having stated this, we now turn to point number 17 in the same statement of beliefs where we read:

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, *her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth* which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and

correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.

Now we see that SDAs have *two* sources of authority, two sources of truth: the Bible *and* the writings of Ellen G. White. The last part of point number 17, however, seems to say that the Bible is the higher authority. Ellen White, herself, has written statements which corroborate this.

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and *the Bible only*, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms....Before accepting *any doctrine* or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.¹

This appears to be one of the places where her writings make clear that the Bible, and the Bible only, is to be the *final* test of all doctrine and experience. However, please note how SDAs have interpreted "the Bible, and the Bible only."

When we claim to stand on the Bible and the Bible alone, we bind ourselves to receive, unequivocally and fully, all that the Bible teaches....We do not, then discard, but obey, the Bible by endorsing the visions [of E.G. White].²

The Scriptures are emphasized as our only rule of faith and practice. This, however, does not nullify the importance of the visions of Ellen White or make her any less inspired than were the Bible writers.³

The Seventh-day Adventist community has recently released *The Study Bible*,^{4,5} which was printed by the Review

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 595.

² Uriah Smith [renowned, early Adventist leader and contemporary of Ellen White], *Review and Herald*, 1886-1-13, as quoted in *Ministry*, 1980-10-54.

³ *Ministry*, 1980-10-54.

⁴ Published by a conservative Historic Adventist group. Some Evangelical Adventists privately renounce it.

and Herald Publishing Association, a leading book printer owned and operated by the SDA church. This Bible is sold in Adventist Book Centers throughout the country, and carries this introductory note:

God in his goodness has once again caused "the testimony of Christ" to be confirmed in his church, so that we "come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:6-7). His last day remnant people have had restored through the ministry of Ellen G. White, "the testimony of Jesus" which is "the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 12:17, 19:10). *To combine this inspired commentary with the Scriptures themselves is the purpose of this present volume.*

It is the heartfelt and earnest prayer of the publishers, that this inspired Word, *with its accompanying inspired commentary*, will go out into all the world and prepare a people for the great day of God.

The Study Bible lists hundreds of references and quotations from Ellen White which are intended to guide the Adventist reader in his search for truth.

In the Adult Sabbath School Lessons for October to December 1994, on the topic of *The Three Angels' Messages*, we find this quote:

We understand that this gift [spirit of prophecy] has been in a special sense manifested through the writings of Ellen White, whose work functions, not as another Bible, or supplement to the Bible, but as an *inspired commentary designed to lead us to a clear understanding of Scripture*.⁶

⁵ *The Study Bible*, (Harrah, OK: Academy Enterprises, Inc., printed by R & H Publishing Association, Hagerstown, MD, 1993).

⁶ Erwin R. Gain, Editor; Brian Jones, Principle Contributor, Adult Sabbath School Lessons, Teacher's Edition, *Three Angels' Messages—Last Call for Heaven*, (Nampa ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association), p. 133.

In practice, how does an “inspired commentary” work? If the Bible and the writings of Ellen White disagree, which one should be the final authority? We see the confusion already. If the “inspired commentary” of Ellen White gives a particular interpretation, then a “good Adventist” would be duty bound to take the interpretation of the “inspired commentary” over, say, an uninspired commentary by some scholar. Therefore, in practice, many SDAs give her writings supreme authority.

At this point it should be noted that there are *many* statements in the writings of Ellen White which would disagree with the above premise.⁷ But there are also statements which would uphold it.⁸ In practice what usually

⁷ “The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. Says the apostle John, ‘Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.’ 1 John 4:1. And Isaiah declares, ‘To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ Isaiah 8:20.” Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, vii.

“Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light [in context, Ellen White is referring to her own writings] to lead men and women to the greater light. O, how much good would be accomplished if the books containing this light were read with a determination to carry out the principles they contain! There would be a thousandfold greater vigilance, a thousandfold more self-denial and resolute effort. And many more would now be rejoicing in the light of present truth.” Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1903-01-20.

⁸ “I have the most precious matter to reproduce and place before the people in testimony form. While I am able to do this work, the people must have these things, to revive past truth, *without one heretical sentence, in that which I have written*. This, I am instructed, is to be a living letter to all in regard to my faith.” Ellen. G. White, Nov. 16, 1905, addressed to “My dear Granddaughter Mabel.” Notice the date of this letter. It was written *after* the large majority of EGW’s books and articles were published. Therefore, it includes most of her writings.

happens is that the person teaching will quote Ellen White, choosing the particular statement designed to substantiate and give credibility to what *he* is teaching.⁹ The supreme authority of Ellen White is usually cited in the context of defending the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, a doctrine which cannot otherwise be proved.^{10,11}

One must, however, in his search for truth, reach a conclusion as to what is his final and ultimate authority. I trust that you, the reader, will have concluded by this time that the Bible and the *Bible only* is the ultimate source of authority.

Should we evaluate one who claims to be “the Lord’s messenger”?

Because the writings of Ellen White and the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment are inextricably linked together, we cannot

⁹ For example, see the approximately 200 Ellen G. White quotes which have been marshaled to support the teachings of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment listed in Adult Sabbath School Lessons, *Three Angels’ Messages*.

¹⁰ For example, the October 1980 *Ministry*, quoted earlier, listed statements supporting the view that the writings of Ellen White should be *included* within the term, “The Bible, and the Bible Only,” and also referred to her writings as an “inspired commentary.” This was a special issue of *Ministry* devoted to the topic of “Christ and His High Priestly Ministry,” published when the biblical support for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment was being questioned by Dr. Desmond Ford and others.

¹¹ There are some Adventists, such as Bill Shea and the late Dr. G. Hasel, who claim to be able to support the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment from the Bible. However, other Adventist scholars question their methods of typological interpretation.

evaluate one without evaluating the other. This, however, raises serious questions in the minds of many Adventists.

Should one attempt to pass judgment on those who claim to have a prophetic message from God? The answer is evident. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul gives this instruction for evaluating prophets:¹²

And let two or three prophets speak, and *let the others pass judgment* (1 Cor. 14:29).

In the closing counsel of his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul again addresses the church with respect to evaluating prophetic utterances. He says:

Do not despise prophetic utterances. But *examine everything carefully*; hold fast to that which is good (1 Thess. 5:20–21).

“Examine” is in the imperative mood. Not only does Paul say that we should let others pass judgment, but he *commands* the church to examine everything carefully and to keep that which is good. It is implied that if, under examination, some prophetic utterance is found to be spurious, it should be rejected.

John wrote:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but *test the spirits* to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1–3).

Scripture is replete with instructions for evaluating people who allege to be given signs, wonders, dreams, and prophetic utterances from God.¹³ Therefore, we conclude

¹² The biblical definition of a prophet is one who speaks for God. A prophet's message may or may not include predictive content. See Ex. 4:14–17; 7:1.

¹³ See Deut. 13:1–5; 18:20–22; 1 Ki. 13:11–26; Jer. 23:16, 25–32; Ez. 13:2; Mt. 7:15–20; Mt. 24:10–12; 2 Pet. 1:20–2:1; 1 Jn. 4:1–3; 1 Cor. 14:29–32.

that not only is it permissible to carefully examine the messages of one who claims to speak with God's authority, but we are *commanded* to do so. As we do this, we are not making any assertions of equality or superiority to the prophet or "Lord's messenger." Rather, we are only doing our duty as intelligent Christians, comparing these writings with the supreme authority—the Bible.

What is truth?

This, too, seems like a simplistic question. Truth is the real state of things. Truth is what *is*. "Thy Word is truth."¹⁴ However, before we start on our journey of evaluating truth we must clearly have in mind the difference between truth and error. At this point, we are not yet concerned with defining theological, doctrinal, or propositional truth. Rather, in this chapter, we want to clarify our communication by defining what is truth.

For example, if my destination were Tucson, Arizona (which is south of Phoenix), and I leave Phoenix, Arizona driving *north* on Interstate 17, and two and a half hours later I find myself in Flagstaff, would I have been going the right direction? Most would immediately answer, "No." But, how would you answer if I told you that we had a splendid drive, went through beautiful Sedona, and were taking the scenic route to Tucson? Would we be going in the right direction then? Again, most—I hope—would say we were *not* going in the right direction. But, let's say that I am the bus driver, and you are a passenger. When we reach Flagstaff, I realize that I am going the wrong direction. However, most of my passengers really don't know where they are, and it is getting late. I know that you will soon be

¹⁴ Jn. 17:17.

sleeping, so I retrace my path, go back to Phoenix, and this time go south on Interstate 10, and in another two hours we are in Tucson. When we get into Tucson, you wake up, and I tell you that you can be thankful that I knew the way from Phoenix to Tucson, and drove you to Tucson without going the wrong way. Would that be truth or error? If you say, "Error," we will understand each other throughout this book. If you say, "Truth," we are already in trouble!

Progressive truth

The following discussion on progressive truth is brought out here at the beginning before we start our study. We will soon find that there are numerous statements in the writings of Ellen G. White, including her early visions, that are clearly erroneous. Later, many of these statements were changed or reinterpreted. We will find that often the early statements stand in *direct contradiction* to her later statements. Many in the Adventist church explain this by using "progressive revelation." Therefore, it is vitally important that we understand exactly what is, and what is not, progressive truth or progressive revelation.

What progressive revelation is

Progressive revelation has two nuances of meaning. Progressive "truth" changes for two reasons. The first is that a specific truth may no longer have application. In Noah's day the truth was, "A flood is coming; get into the ark." That was truth then. While this record remains true today, it is not *applicable* truth today. Two things must be said about this first nuance of meaning. (1) The truth involved was applicable to specific circumstances. (2) Under those specific circumstances, the truth was indeed truth and not error.

The second nuance of meaning in progressive revelation is that not all truth is given at one time, but it is given in incremental steps. The important thing to recognize is that the additionally revealed truth does *not* contradict the former truth. For example, there are many Old Testament prophecies which point forward to the first coming of Christ. These prophecies, by themselves, are only hints of the reality. But, when the reality comes, these prophecies are still truth and become a *part* of a larger truth. It is important to recognize that this *part* of truth is still truth and not error. In other words, progressive truth is an unfolding of truth, not a progression from error to truth.

What progressive revelation is not

Too often error has gone undetected because it is wearing a garment labeled “progressive truth.” Are the following illustrations truth or error?

If I told you clearly that I was going to purchase a new, green Dodge in two days and then came home with a used gray Ford in ten days would that be truth? I hope you will say, “No, you did not tell the truth.” Now, let’s say that what I told you really was the truth, because the green Dodge is a gray-green, and while I said it was new, I did not mean “brand new.” The gray Ford is a greenish-gray, and it is only slightly used and looks much like the new Dodge. I really did buy the car in two days. I just did not fill out all the paper work or write a check for it until ten days later; therefore, I really did tell you the truth. Now what would your answer be? I hope you say, “No, you still did not tell the truth, and you are trying to deceive me into thinking you are telling the truth, when in reality, you are not.” If this is your answer, we can proceed. If you say this last illustration is truth, we are really in trouble!

Picture a continuum from black to white, with varying shades of gray between the two. Black is almost the same as the darkest gray, which is almost the same as the next lighter shade of gray. At the other end of the continuum, we see that the lightest shades of gray are almost white. When moving from one end of the continuum to the other, in small, incremental steps, there is very little *perception* of change. However, does that make black white, or white black? If you say, “No,” we will understand each other. However, if you say, “Because the black on the continuum changes into white without sharp lines of demarcation between the two, then black must be the same as white, because this is progressive revelation,” we are again in trouble. This would not be progressive “truth” but deceptive error. Even if error and truth are connected by a number of intermediate gradations, that does not make error into truth. Evaluating truth and error requires clear and precise thinking, especially so when the two are connected by a number of intermediate or contrary positions.

Chapter Summary

1. The Bible is the ultimate authority and must stand over, and judge all post-canonical prophetic writings, utterances, and experiences.
2. The New Testament commands Christians to carefully evaluate the prophetic messages of those who claim to speak for God.
3. Truth is the real state of things. Truth is what is. Truth is the ultimate and objective reality. One cannot go one direction and be going another direction at the same time.
4. While there may be a special message or aspect of truth that is only applicable to a certain set of circumstances,

or to a particular point in history, that truth is never error.

5. Progressive revelation is truth being revealed in increments. However, incremental truth is not error, nor do later revelations contradict former revelations.
6. Progressive revelation is not a continuum from black to gray to white. Black is not white, nor is white black, even if they are linked by bands of gray. Neither is error truth, nor truth error, even if they are linked by a number of intermediate positions. Progressive truth cannot be internally inconsistent or contradictory.

Chapter 3



White, God, and Miller

The foundation for Adventism is laid in Ellen White's comprehensive endorsement of William Miller's methods and message.

William Miller was a farmer who, using his King James Bible and a concordance, came to the conclusion that Christ was going to come in 1843. Ellen White's endorsement of Miller is seen in her earliest writings.¹ Not only does Ellen White endorse Miller's 1843 message, she, professing the prophetic authority of a messenger of God,²

¹ See Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, pp. 229–231; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 128–132.

² Ellen White never claimed to be a prophet; rather, she spoke of herself as a “messenger of God.” For all practical purposes, however, the Adventist church accepts her writings as God inspired, prophetic writings. See *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, No. 17, “The Gift

unequivocally states—as we will soon see—that God chose, enlightened, guided, and empowered Miller in his methods of study and his conclusions.

Therefore, at the very outset, the SDA church is faced with the dilemma. If Miller was right, so was Ellen G. White. If Miller was wrong, so was EGW. There are no other conclusions. It should be noted here that EGW's endorsement of Miller's conclusions came *after* 1844 when it should have been obvious that Miller was wrong. If all of the quotations from EGW cited in this chapter were written *after* her first "vision" in December of 1844 why did she support known error?³ In the citations to follow, it should be observed that EGW not only endorsed Miller's interpretation of October 22, 1844, as the fulfillment of Daniel 8:14,⁴ she also endorsed many of the methods and other teachings of Miller.

We will now carefully examine what Ellen White said about William Miller, and then in the next chapter, we will investigate and evaluate Miller's methods and message.

of Prophecy" which endorses Ellen White's prophetic ministry and states that "her writings are a continuing and authoritative *source* of truth."

³ There is evidence that EGW had "vision-like" experiences as early as 1842 before what is said to be her first vision. "In 1842 I constantly attended the Second Advent meetings in Portland Maine, and fully believed that the Lord was coming. Inexpressible love for Jesus filled my soul. Wave after wave of glory rolled over me, until my body grew stiff...I remained in this state of body and mind a long time." Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 11, 12.

⁴ Miller did not accept the reinterpretation of his 1844 message, which moved its focus from the literal second coming of Christ, to Christ's "coming" to the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, as Seventh-day Adventists did. See Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 167, 168.

Ellen White said God chose William Miller, guided his mind, his methods of Bible study, his conclusions, his charts, his mission, and more.

To help the reader grasp the significance of EGW's endorsement of Miller and be better able to summarize the impact, numbers will be placed in brackets within the quotes which will correspond to the numbered summary at the end of this chapter. These numbers identify different aspects of her endorsement. For example, [1] has reference to her frequent mention of angels coming to assist Miller.

I saw that God [1] sent his angel to move upon the heart of a farmer who had not believed the Bible, and led him to search the prophecies. [1] Angels of God repeatedly visited that [2] chosen one, and [3] guided his mind, and [4] opened his understanding to prophecies which had ever been dark to God's people. The commencement of [5] the chain of truth was given him, and he was led on to search for link after link, until he looked with wonder and admiration upon the word of God. He saw there [5] a perfect chain of truth. That Word which he had regarded as uninspired, now opened before his vision with beauty and glory. [5] He saw that one portion of scripture explained another, and when one portion was closed to his understanding, he found in another portion of the Word that which explained it.⁵

God [2] called him to leave his farm, [6] as Elisha was called to leave his oxen and the field of his labor to follow Elijah. With trembling, William Miller began to unfold the [7] mysteries of the kingdom of God to the people. He gained strength with every effort. He carried the people down through the prophecies to the second advent of Christ. [6] As John the Baptist heralded the first advent of Jesus, and prepared the way for his coming, so also, Wm. Miller and those who joined him, proclaimed the second advent of the Son of God.⁶

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 129.

⁶ Ibid.

God [3] led the mind of Wm. Miller into the prophecies, and gave him [4] great light upon the book of Revelation.⁷

God [5] moved upon his chosen servant, who with clearness and in the [8] power of the Holy Spirit, opened the prophecies, and [4] showed the harmony of the visions of Daniel and John, and other portions of the Bible, and pressed home upon the hearts of the people the sacred, fearful warnings of the Word, to prepare for the coming of the Son of man.⁸

Mr. Miller traced down the prophecies with an exactness that struck conviction to the hearts of his hearers. He dwelt upon the [9] prophetic periods, and brought many proofs to strengthen his position.⁹

[1] Angels of God accompanied William Miller in his mission. He was firm and undaunted, fearlessly proclaiming the [4] message [2] committed to his trust. A world lying in wickedness and a cold, worldly church were enough to call into action all his energies and lead him willingly to endure toil, privation, and suffering. Although opposed by professed Christians and the world, and buffeted by Satan and his angels, he ceased not to preach [7] the everlasting gospel to crowds wherever he was invited, sounding far and near the cry, "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come."¹⁰

I saw that [10] God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843. It was His design to arouse the people and bring them to a testing point, where they should decide for or against the truth.¹¹

Ministers who would not accept this [7] saving message themselves hindered those who would have received it.¹²

[1] Angels of God were sent to protect him.¹³ -

⁷ Ibid., p. 132.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* Vol. 1, p. 14.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 232.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 235

¹³ Ibid.

The opposition manifested by church members toward his message emboldened the baser classes to go to greater lengths; and enemies plotted to take his life as he should leave the place of meeting. But [1] holy angels were in the throng, and one of these, in the form of a man, took the arm of this servant of the Lord and led him in safety from the angry mob. His work was not yet done, and Satan and his emissaries were disappointed in their purpose.¹⁴

[1] Angels were watching with the deepest interest the result of [7] the heavenly message, and when the churches turned from and rejected it, they in sadness consulted with Jesus.¹⁵

William Miller possessed [11] strong mental powers, disciplined by thought and study; and he added to these [3] the wisdom of heaven by connecting himself with the Source of wisdom.¹⁶

As God sent His servant to warn the world of the coming Flood, so He sent chosen messengers to make known the nearness of the final judgment. And as [6] Noah's contemporaries laughed to scorn the predictions of the preacher of righteousness, so in Miller's day many, even of the professed people of God, scoffed at the words of warning.¹⁷

William Miller had no sympathy with those influences that led to [12] fanaticism.¹⁸

I have seen that [13] the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as He wanted them.¹⁹

Summary of EGW's Endorsement of Miller

1. Angels of God were actively involved with William Miller. God initiated Miller's interest in the prophecies by sending his angel to assist him while he was still an

¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 337.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 235.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 335.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 74.

unbeliever. Angels of God repeatedly visited William Miller and accompanied him on his mission. They protected Miller from harm, and on one occasion an angel took the form of a man and led Miller out of a hostile crowd. Angels watched with deepest interest those who accepted and rejected Miller's message.

2. God chose Miller for this work. Miller is called "that chosen one." God called Miller to leave his farm and begin preaching, and committed to Miller's trust a special message.
3. God guided Miller's mind and led him in his study of the prophecies and connected him to the wisdom of heaven.
4. God guided Miller's conclusions. God opened to Miller's understanding prophecies which had ever been dark to God's people. Miller was given "great light upon the book of Revelation." The Holy Spirit showed Miller the harmony of the visions of Daniel and John.
5. God showed Miller the correct interpretation of prophecy. A perfect chain of biblical truth was given him. He saw that one portion of Scripture explained another. If he could not understand a given text in its own context, he explained it by another portion of Scripture. God moved upon His servant, William Miller, with clearness in the power of the Holy Spirit.
6. Miller is associated with the greats of Bible history. His call by God can be compared to that of Elisha. The importance of Miller's message is similar to the importance of the message of John the Baptist who prepared the way for Christ's first coming. The way people scoffed at Miller's message was similar to the way the antediluvians scoffed at Noah.

7. Miller's message is called "the mysteries of the kingdom of God," "the everlasting gospel," and "the heavenly message."
8. Miller was moved upon by the power of the Holy Spirit as he studied the prophecies.
9. Miller was correct in having multiple prophecies pointing to 1843. God caused him to understand prophetic periods (plural). Miller brought many proofs to strengthen his position.
10. God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843.
11. Miller possessed strong mental powers. He was disciplined in his thought and study.
12. William Miller was not a fanatic.
13. William Miller's 1843 chart, which listed a number of prophetic periods that ended in 1843, was directed by the hand of the Lord. It should never be changed. It was just as God wanted it.

We can see that Ellen White's endorsement of William Miller is comprehensive. It is of great importance to our study to realize that she unequivocally states that Miller was guided by God in his methods, his conclusions, and his message.

With this glowing, prophetic endorsement of Miller, we look forward with anticipation to the next chapter where Miller's methods and conclusions will be examined.

Many
false prophets
will arise,
and will
mislead
many

Chapter 4



William Miller:

His Methods and Message

Many of the distinctive, foundational doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church can be traced either to William Miller, to a reinterpretation of his teachings—after they were proved to be in error—or to others who were connected with or influenced by him.¹

By any standards Miller and his revival represent a noteworthy part of the nineteenth-century American history. In fact, Millerism is one of the most widespread apocalyptic revivals

¹ “The backbone of Miller’s fifteen proofs was a complex system of interlinked prophecies from the books of Daniel and Revelation which in turn shaped the teachings of Seventh-day Adventists.” Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. ii.

ever, and there are still several million people, Seventh-day Adventists, members of the Radio Church of God [now the Worldwide Church of God], or of the many small Adventist churches and even Jehovah's Witnesses, that in one way or another have to reckon with William Miller in their spiritual pedigree.²

Much has been written about William Miller,³ but for our purposes all we need to know is that he started "the great second advent movement" by his predictions that Christ would come in 1843. With this brief introduction, let us discover from Miller's own works his methods and message.

In the last chapter we saw that Ellen White gave William Miller a comprehensive, glowing endorsement. She, speaking with "prophetic authority," stated unequivocally that God chose Miller, guided his mind in the study of the Scriptures, and showed him a method of Bible interpretation which linked one part of Scripture to another in such a way as to help him discover a "perfect chain of truth."

The purpose of this chapter is to examine and evaluate Miller's method of Bible study and the conclusions he reached by the use of these methods. Did he really discover "a perfect chain of truth," as Ellen White stated? The stakes are high for Adventists. If Miller was wrong, then Ellen White was equally wrong.

As we evaluate Miller's methods and message, we are not evaluating the character or sincerity of William Miller. We should remember that Miller was not a trained theolo-

² Ibid., p. 2.

³ "University Microfilms has published a microfilm collection of rare books and manuscripts on Millerism. These films include over 1000 titles, Millerite as well as non-Millerite, 110 volumes of periodicals, and over 1000 copies of letters and manuscripts....The largest collection is found at Aurora College, Aurora, Illinois." Ibid., p. 5.

gian and he used methods which others of his time also used. Nevertheless, it is our purpose to seriously look at the methods Miller used and to see if, indeed, these could be endorsed by God. Was he, as Ellen White said, actually led by divine wisdom to understand portions of Scripture and uncover truths which had long been hidden from the people of God? Even though it is our desire to be kind to Miller the man, we must be candid in our evaluation of Miller's methods and message.

Miller published a document

in January, 1843, the very year he expected Christ to return. This synopsis of his views lists fifteen modes of arriving at 1843 under the heading: "Time Proved in Fifteen Different Ways."⁴

Below are listed the fifteen proofs Miller used to prove Christ was coming in 1843. These, with accompanying charts, are found in *The End of Historicism*, by Kai Arasola, pages 219–225. This chapter will draw heavily upon Dr. Arasola's work on William Miller. Dr. Arasola is a Seventh-day Adventist and earned his Doctorate of Theology in Uppsala University in Sweden.

I have tried to reproduce this important document accurately as it was originally published. I have chosen not to correct any original errors. Neither have I, in this chapter, inserted the scholarly "(sic)" to indicate that the error was in the original. To do so would be distracting to the reader. I encourage the reader to overlook any spelling or grammatical errors and concentrate on the biblical arguments themselves. I have, however, changed the way the references were originally listed, to make for easier identification. For example, instead of "Matth. xvi. 27" as used by Miller, I have simply listed this reference as "Mt. 16:27."

⁴ Arasola, *Ibid.*, p. 91.

Because of the importance of this material, I have also chosen to leave these long quotations in the regular font size for easier reading.

I encourage—yes, even implore—the reader to take the needed time to *carefully read* each of Miller's fifteen proofs. Examine his use of Scripture and his resulting conclusions. *Without a thorough understanding of this chapter, it will be impossible to grasp the arguments and conclusions of this book.* This chapter locks in—or out—many of the unique aspects of Adventist theology, hermeneutics and the prophetic ministry of Ellen White.

At the end of each “proof” a short evaluation will be given. It is not my purpose to give an in-depth evaluation of these fifteen proofs. Most readers will immediately draw their own conclusions.

TIME PROVED IN FIFTEEN DIFFERENT WAYS

ONE: I prove it by the time given by Moses, in the 26th chapter of Leviticus, being seven times that the people of God are to be in bondage to the kingdoms of this world; or in Babylon, literal and mystical; which seven times cannot be understood less than seven times 360 revolutions of the earth in its orbit, making 2520 years. I believe this began according to Jeremiah 15:4, —“And I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem,” and Isa. 7:8, “For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Resin: and within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people,”—when Manasseh was carried captive to Babylon, and Israel

was no more a nation,—see chronology, 2 Chron. 33:9, “So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel,”—the 677th year B.C. Then take 677 out of 2520, leaves A.D. 1843, when the punishment of the people of God will end.⁵

Evaluation

This “proof” is a classic nineteenth-century illustration of proof-texting running wild. The context of the proof texts are ignored and supporting texts are linked together haphazardly.⁶ Lev. 26:18 reads as follows:

If also after these things, you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins (Lev. 26:18).

This says nothing about the second coming of Christ. Not only that, but this is not even a time prophecy at all. The word “times” is not in Hebrew, and the emphasis of this passage is on the *degree* of punishment, not the *length of time* of punishment. This was brought to the attention of Miller by Professor G. Bush. However:

Miller insisted on the superiority of the King James translation as fifty times better to any, however learned, “opinion” on the original text.⁷

This first proof is totally invalid and makes a mockery of sound biblical interpretation. If this is one of the links in the “perfect chain of truth,” it is a broken link.

⁵ See *Miller’s Lectures*, p. 251.

⁶ This stands in contrast with the historical-grammatical method used by evangelicals.

⁷ Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 101.

TWO: It is proved typically by the year of release. See Deut. 15:1, 2: "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release; and this is the manner of the release; every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor or of his brother, because it is called the Lord's release." Also Jer. 34:14: At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother a Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee, and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee; but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear." We are, by this type, taught that the people of God will be delivered from their servitude and bondage when they have served their 7 prophetic years. 7 times 360 years is 2520. Beginning with the captivity of Israel and the king of Judah, Manasseh, 677 B.C., must end in A.D. 1843, when the children of God will be released from all bondage and slavery.⁸

Evaluation

This text says nothing about the second coming of Christ. Here it appears Miller is using an allegorical method of interpretation in that he is giving a meaning to a passage which is not evident in the passage itself. This method was used by some of the early church fathers and also during the dark ages, but was renounced by the reformers as invalid. It has no controls, and by using this method one can make the Bible prove anything. We find here another broken link in the "perfect chain of truth."

⁸ See *Second Advent Library*, No. 14.

THREE: It is also proved by the seven years' war of Zion with her enemies, given to us in Ez. 39:9,10: "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire; and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God." The Children of God will be contending with their enemies, spoiling those that spoiled them, and robbing those that have robbed them, 7 years, prophetic, which is 2520 common years. Beginning as before, when Babylon began to spoil and rob them, and when they by the fire of the truth began to burn up the weapons of their enemies, in this moral warfare; this will end in 1843.⁹

Evaluation

Here Miller is taking an obscure, apocalyptic section in Ezekiel, which mentions people burning weapons for seven years, and turning this into a prophecy of the second coming. The seven years are set forth in Scripture as the time *during* which these weapons are to be burned, not as the time span *before* this burning takes place. Realizing this, Miller taught that the burning of enemy weapons started in 667 B.C. and would continue until 1843. Miller relies on one of his main hermeneutical principles: prophetic time, by which he means that a prophetic day equals

⁹ See *Miller's Life and Views*, p. 69.

a literal year. To conclude that this “proof” is a link in that “perfect chain of truth” is absurd.¹⁰

FOUR: It is proved, also, by the sign of the Sabbath. Ex. 31:13–17: “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore: for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath-day he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.” Heb. 4:4, 9–11: “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise: And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.” “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

As God was six days creating the old heavens and earth, and rested on the seventh; so it is a sign Christ

¹⁰ For a more detailed description of this prophecy and Miller’s absurd interpretation of it, see Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 105.

will also labor six days in creating the new heavens and earth, and rest on the seventh. How long is a day with the Lord? Peter tells us in his 2 Epistle 3:8: But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” If, then, a thousand years is a day with the Lord, how long has Christ been to work creating the new? I answer, if we will allow the Bible to make us a chronology, we shall find this year, 1843, the 6000 years from Adam’s fall will be finished. Then the Anti-typical Sabbath of 1000 years will commence. Rev. 10:6: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”¹¹

Evaluation

It appears that anytime the number seven is mentioned in Scripture it becomes a prophecy of the second coming. I have written at length on the topic of the Sabbath in *Sabbath in Christ*, with a whole chapter dedicated to this reference in Hebrews. Neither Exodus 31 nor Hebrews 4 could be construed to be a time prophecy of the second coming. Here again we see allegorizing and proof-texting running wild. This is not a link in “a perfect chain of truth,” but a blatant misuse of Scripture.

FIVE: Again, we can prove it be the typical jubilee. Lev. 25:8–13: “And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be

¹¹ See *Life and Views*, p. 157.

unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty through all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you; ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you, ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee, ye shall return every man unto his possession." Now, if we can show any rule whereby we can find the antitype, we can tell when the people of God will come into the inheritance of the purchased possession, and the redemption of their bodies, and the trump of jubilee will proclaim liberty, a glorious one, through all the land. In order to do this we must take notice of the order of the Sabbaths. "Seven Sabbaths shall be complete." There is seven kinds of Sabbaths, which all have seven for a given number.

The Jews kept but six Sabbaths: if they had kept the seventh they would have been made perfect without us; but they broke the seventh. "Therefore there remains a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God." The Jewish Sabbaths were:—

1. The 7th day. Ex. 31:15.
2. The 50th day. Lev. 23:15,16.
3. The 7th week. Deut. 16:9.
4. The 7th month. Lev. 23:24,25.

5. The 7th year. Lev. 25:3,4.
6. The 7 times of 7 years and 50th year Jubilee.
7. The 7 times 7 Jubilees and the 50th Jubilee will bring us to a complete or perfect Sabbath,—the great Jubilee of Jubilees. Thus 7, times 7, 50 years is 49 times 50 = 2450 years.

It is very evident no year of release or Jubilee was ever kept after the reign of Josiah, the last king of Jerusalem that obeyed the commandments of the Lord, or kept his statutes. This king's reign ended B.C. 607. See 2 Ki. 23; 2 Chron. 35, 36 and Jer. 22. After which the Jews never kept, neither could they keep, a year of release, or Jubilee; for neither their kings, their nobles, their people, or their lands could have been redeemed after this. Jer. 44:20–23. Here ended the Jewish Jubilees, when they had not kept more than 21 Jubilees, lacking 28 of coming to the great Jubilee.

And now the land was to lay desolate, while the people of God were in their enemies' land. Lev. 26:34. How long is a Jubilee of Jubilees? Ans. 49 times 50 years = 2450 years. When did these years begin? Ans. When the Jews ceased the keeping of the Sabbaths and Jubilees, at the close of Josiah's reign, B.C. 607. Take 607 from 2450, it leaves A.D. 1843; when the Jubilee of Jubilees will come.¹²

Evaluation

Ellen White said:

¹² See *Second Advent Library*, No. 14.

William Miller possessed strong mental powers, disciplined by thought and study; and he added to these the wisdom of heaven by connecting himself with the Source of wisdom.¹³

With the above endorsement clearly in mind consider the following: Miller lists no Bible reference for his so-called “seventh Sabbath.” Why? There is none.

Even within historicist ideals Miller should have seen that in his list of the seven Sabbaths the second and the third sabbath were one and the same festival, the feast of weeks or the Pentecost.¹⁴

There is no record that the Jews *ever* celebrated the Jubilee. It seems that the Jubilee pointed forward to the release offered by Christ in forgiveness of sins.¹⁵ At His first coming Jesus read a prophetic Jubilee passage and then said, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk. 4:21). It appears that Miller was looking for prophecies of the second coming that would end in 1843, and would go to great lengths to find them, even when they were not there. We must conclude that this is not a link in “a perfect chain of truth.”

SIX: I prove it by Hosea 6:1–3: “Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” This prophecy is the two days of the

¹³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 335.

¹⁴ Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, pp. 116, 117.

¹⁵ See Ratzlaff, “Jubilee Sabbath,” in *Sabbath in Christ*.

Roman Kingdom, in its Imperial, Kingly and Papal form, with its great iron teeth, tearing and persecuting the people of God; the third day is the same as Rev. 10:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years;" when the people of God will live in his sight, "live and reign with him a thousand years." If, then, the third day is a thousand years, then the two days are of equal length. When did the two days begin? Ans. When the Jews made a league with the Romans. See Hosea 5:13: "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound." Dan. 9:23: "And after the league made with him, he shall work deceitfully; for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people." 1 Maccabees 8, 9. This league was confirmed and ratified, and the Grecian kingdom ceased to rule over God's people B.C. 158 years. Then add 158 to 1842, and we have 2000 years, or two days; as Peter says, 2 Peter 3:8: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And 1843 is the first year in the 3d thousand years, or 3d day of the Lord. The world has stood since the fall of man 2000 years under the Patriarchs; 2000 years under the Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian; and 2000 years under the Roman Pagan, Papal and Kingly.¹⁶

¹⁶ See *Second Advent Library*, No. 3, p. 45.

Evaluation

Miller was very fond of this prophecy and referred to it as “a pearl of great price, lying deep in the waters of prophecy.”¹⁷ A pattern running through Miller’s interpretive method is that of linking one invalid assumption to another invalid assumption and then attempting to draw out divine “truth.” As a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, so conclusions built upon assumptions are no stronger than their weakest assumption. When several disconnected texts must be pulled together and interpreted using a string of invalid, linking assumptions in order to “prove” what cannot be proved by contextual study, something is wrong. The most—or should it be least—one can say in evaluating this type of Bible “study” is that it is foolhardy, if not outright dangerous and deceptive.

SEVEN: I can prove it by the length of the vision which Daniel had (8:1–14) of the ram, he-goat and the horn, which Daniel was informed was 2300 days long. Dan. 8:13, 14: “Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto the certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot. And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and thee hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” And from which the 70 weeks were cut off, and fulfilled, the year of Christ’s death. Dan. 9:20–27. Then 70 weeks of years being cut off from 2300 days, makes these days years; and 490 years being fulfilled in A.D. 33, leaves 1810

¹⁷ Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 118.

years to the fulfilment of the vision, which added to 33 makes 1843, when the Sanctuary will be cleansed, and the people of God justified.¹⁸

Evaluation

Most people—*without* previous prejudice—who read the above Bible references *in context*, will immediately see that Daniel 8:1–14 is not a time prophecy of the second coming of Christ. Most scholars believe this *wicked* “little horn” power to be Antiochus Epiphanes IV, who polluted the sanctuary. He sacrificed a pig on the altar of burnt offerings and set up the image of Zeus, which Daniel calls “The Abomination of Desolation.”^{19,20} The “cleansing” referred to in Daniel 8:14 has the literal Jewish sanctuary in view, not the cleansing of the world, as Miller taught. However, the above “proof” was the one proof that was most widely used by Miller and even more so by his followers, and it was this text which, after the 1843 disappointment, helped Adventists regain their momentum. It became the basis of the “seven-month movement” with October 22, 1844, set as the new date for the second coming of Christ. This text is *the one* text to which Seventh-day Adventists still cling “as the central pillar of Adventism.” Later, as we will see, Adventists reinterpreted this “proof” of Miller’s and it became the foundation for their cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment doctrine to which this book is devoted. This “proof” will be evaluated in

¹⁸ See *Miller’s Lectures*, p. 73.

¹⁹ See 1 Maccabees, chapters 4–6 for a description of the work of Antiochus Epiphanes IV and the cleansing of the Jewish sanctuary.

²⁰ It is true that the desecration of the temple by Antiochus is used by Jesus and Paul as a *type* of the future antichrist. See Mt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:1–12.

depth in subsequent chapters. It will be seen that it is built on numerous assumptions, over half of which are invalid or directly contrary to clear Bible evidence.

EIGHT: It can be proved by Daniel 7:6,7: “And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swear by him that liveth forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.” The question is asked, How long to the end of these wonders? These wonders are to the resurrection. See 2d and 3d verses: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.” The answer is given by the angel, who informs Daniel it shall be for a time, times, and a half, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all will be finished. Ez. 12:10–15: “Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that are among them. Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove and go into captivity. And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulders in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see

not the ground with his eyes. My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of Chaldeans, yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there. And I will scatter toward every wind all that are about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries.” Jer. 15:4: “And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.” This scattering begun, when Israel was scattered by Esarhaddon, and when the king of Judah, Manasseh, was carried to Babylon, B.C. 677. Thus they continued to be a people scattered, by the kings of the earth, until they fled into the wilderness in A.D. 538, which makes 1215 years. There they remained in the wilderness a time, times, and a half—which began A.D. 538, and continued until A.D. 1798. The kings of the earth then had power, and the time, times and a half of the scattering of the holy people is filled up by 45 years, being the remainder of the 1215, making in all 1260 years, under the nations or kings, and ending in the year 1843,—which is the fullness of times. Eph. 1:7,10: “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:”—when the people of God,

both among Jews and Gentiles, will no more be scattered, but gathered in one body in Christ.²¹

Evaluation

As I read the above “proof” I had to shake my head and say, “How can he do that?” And then, “He can’t do that!” There are a number of tenuous assumptions behind some of these connections. The year 538 plays a key role in several of Millers “proofs” but:

It is not easy to convince people of a date which is not generally attested in secular history.²²

The quote from Ephesians seems to have nothing to do with Daniel, Jeremiah or the time of the second coming. Most believe this refers to what Christ did at the cross and at the resurrection rather than with some time prophecy pointing to 1843. This is another broken link in the “perfect chain of truth.”

NINE: It can be proved by Daniel 7:11–13: “And from the time that the daily sacrifices shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

The number 1335 days, from the taking away of Rome Pagan, A.D. 508, to set up Rome Papal, and the reign of Papacy, is 1290 days, which was exactly

²¹ See *Second Advent Library*, No. 6, p. 45.

²² Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 133.

fulfilled in 1290 years, being fulfilled in 1798. This proves the 1335 days to be years, and that Daniel will stand in his lot in A.D. 1843. For proof texts, see Dan 11:31: "And arms shall stand on his part, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." 2 Thess. 2:6-8: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Job 19:25: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."²³

Evaluation

To come up with this "proof" Miller assumed the end of the 1290 days to be the year 1798 when the Pope of Rome was taken captive. He, and Adventists as well, call this date "the time of the end." From this date, Miller, using the day-equals-a-year method, figured back and came to 508. His method was then to look for something in 508 which could be a key event. In Gibbon's popular history of the Roman empire he found that:

Anastasias sent pope the title and insignia of patrician and consul and conferred the appellation of *Agustus*.²⁴

This appeared reasonable to Miller and his associates. Now Miller simply added 45 years, the difference between

²³ See *Miller's Lectures*, p. 100.

²⁴ Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 135.

1335 and 1290, to the date of 1798 and he came up with 1843.

This method reminds me of my experience in high school physics. We occasionally would practice what we called “dry labbing.” We would figure out what the lab results were supposed to be by the formulas, then when we took our measurements in the lab, we would make sure they agreed with the conclusions we already had reached. When we did this we were not practicing good science. Neither was Miller practicing good Bible interpretation. This “proof” is not a solid link in the “perfect chain of truth.”

TEN: It can also be proved by the words of Christ, Lk. 13:32: “And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” These two days, in which Christ casts out devils and does cures, are the same as Hosea’s two days, at the end of which, the devil will be chained, and cast out of the earth into the pit, and shut up. This will take 2000 years of Roman power. Rev. 12:9: “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out with him.” And then the people of God will be perfected. Rev. 20:9: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: of such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

This time began with the “great dragon,” Rev. 12:3: “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and

did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

This government will draw after him one third part of the time, which wicked men have power in the earth, viz. 6000 years; and the 7000th, the year of Christ will take possession and reign with his saints, in perfect bliss.

This dragon power began its power over the saints when the league was made with him, B.C. 158,—and will end in 1842. Then the third day will begin 1843.²⁵

Evaluation

This is another classic example of wild proof-texting. The unwarranted assumptions here are almost too numerous to mention. Who said the “two days” spoken by Christ are the same as the “two days” mentioned by Hosea? How does one know when a day is to equal a year or one thousand years? What evidence is there that these days spoken of by Jesus started in 158 B.C., long before Christ was born? Miller speaks of the devil drawing one third part of the *time*. Most interpret this to be one third of the angels. Upon what basis does Miller get a measure of time? Surely this type of reckless proof-texting and allegorizing of Scripture *cannot* be the result of God guiding the mind of Miller. Surely, as Ellen White contends, God cannot be credited—or blamed—for this type of interpretation. Is this an example of God moving upon His servant with clearness in the power of the Holy Spirit? I think not. This is not the way to study the Bible, nor are Miller’s conclusions truth.

²⁵ See *Second Advent Library*, No. 3, p. 61.

ELEVEN: The trumpets are also a revelation of time. See Rev. 9:5: “And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.” These five months began when the Turks made incursions into the Greek territories, according to Gibbon, in the year 1299, on the 27th day of July. 5 months is 150 years, $5 \times 30 = 150$. This trumpet ended in 1449. And the sixth trumpet began to sound, and was to sound 391 years and 15 days, as in Rev. 9:15: “And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year for to slay the third part of men; and ended 1840 on the 11th of August. Then the seventh trumpet begins, and ends with the fulness of times. Rev. 10:5, 7: “And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” And synchronizes with Daniel 12:7. See section 7, where it is shown to end in the year 1843.²⁶

Evaluation

What evidence does Miller have for starting this “prophecy of the second coming” in 1299? There is no

²⁶ See *Miller's Lectures*, p. 190.

mention of the second coming here. The “hour, day, month, and year” part of this passage says nothing about the *duration* of time. Rather it speaks about a precise *point* in time. Miller completely misses the point. This is another broken link in the “perfect chain of truth” which Ellen White said God gave to Miller.

TWELVE: It can be proved by the two witnesses being clothed in sackcloth 1260 years. See Rev. 11:3: “And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth.” This time began with Papacy, 538, and ended in 1798, during which time the Bible was suppressed from the laity, in all the countries where papacy had power, until the laws of the papal hierarchy were abolished and free toleration was granted to the papal states in 1798. Then the remainder harmonizes with the trumpets: see Rev. 11:14,15: “The second wo is past; and behold, the third wo cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.” And terminates with A.D. 1843.²⁷

Evaluation

This seems to be only another “proof” leading to one of Miller’s key dates: 1798. He does not show how he jumped from 1798 to 1843. Perhaps he just takes this for granted.

²⁷ See Ibid.

THIRTEEN: It can be proved by Rev. 12:6, 14: “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” It is evident that the church is not now in the wilderness, for if so, she must have been there in the apostles’ days, for she enjoys more liberty now among the nations, than in any previous time since the gospel was preached; and it is very evident, for ages past, the true church has been an outlaw among the kingdoms which arose out of the Roman Empire. The church was driven into the wilderness, where they were given into the power of the Pope,—Daniel 7:25: And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into this and until a time and times and the dividing of time,”—in the year A.D. 538; and was in the wilderness 1260 years, until 1798, when free toleration was granted in the kingdoms in the Papal territory. This also harmonizes with the *witnesses* and the *trumpet*. Compare Rev. 11:15, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever,” with Rev. 12:10, “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our

brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night.²⁸

Evaluation

This is nothing but a repeat of other “proofs” already addressed.

FOURTEEN: It is proved by Rev. 13:5: “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.” This time began at the same time as the preceding, when power was given to the Pope by Justinian, A.D. 538, and lasted until the Pope was carried into captivity, and his power abolished, in the year 1798. See 10th verse: “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” This beast is the same as the little horn in Daniel 7th, and synchronizes with Daniel’s “*abomination that maketh desolate*,” or “*that astonisheth*,” (See marginal reading.) Compare Daniel 11:31, and 12:11, with Rev. 13:3–8; and of course his power is abolished with the end of his “setting up,” and the 1290 years. Then Daniel 12:12,—“Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days,”—carries us to the year 1843.²⁹

²⁸ See Ibid., p. 20.

²⁹ See Ibid., p. 77.

Evaluation

Again, this is just another period of time seen by Miller to equal the 1260 days-years of papal domination. Remember that nothing significant even happened in 538.

FIFTEEN: It can be proved by the numbers in Rev. 13:18: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six." connected with Daniel 7:12, as before quoted. This text shows the number of years that Rome would exist under the blasphemous head of Paganism, after it was connected with the people of God by league; beginning B.C. 158, add 666 years, will bring us to A.D. 508, when the daily was taken away. Then add Daniel 12:12, the 1335 to 508, makes the year 1843. When the beast and his image will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and the Lamb. See Rev. 14:9–12: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and the Lamb. See Rev. 14:9–12: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever

receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”³⁰

Evaluation

The number of the mark of the beast is not a *time prophecy*. Rather, it is a description of a coming evil power, or person, which makes war against God’s people. To portray the number of the *beast*—a wicked power—as a prophecy of the second coming of Christ—a righteous and holy event—is completely unwarranted.

Conclusion

We have now looked at Miller’s fifteen “proofs” and have seen his methods and resulting conclusions. That Miller was in error in his conclusions cannot be denied: Christ did not come in 1843, nor did he come in 1844 when “the error” of one year was discovered in his calculations.³¹

Evaluation of Miller’s hermeneutics

As one reads over Miller’s fifteen proofs it is obvious why Miller was wrong. He used faulty methods of interpretation. Among his erroneous methods are the following:

1. Miller used the “proof-text” method. He explained one Bible verse with another. That in itself is not wrong.

³⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³¹ Miller and his followers had not taken into account that 1 B.C. was followed by 1 A.D. with no year zero. I was challenged to find historical proof for this statement by one of the reviewers of the first draft of this book. As yet, I have been unable to do so. However, this is what I was taught in Bible classes in a SDA academy and college.

The error comes in when the context is ignored and the verses selected have no logical connection.

2. Miller used the allegorical method of interpretation. This procedure sees more than one meaning in every Scripture. It delights in finding—"reading into" would be more accurate—a "hidden" meaning in texts. To do this, one must define a given term or symbol with another meaning found elsewhere in Scripture. This method has no controls and often leads to wild proof-texting and sensational conclusions.
3. Miller relied on symbolic numerology. It seems that any time the number seven was used, he took it to be a prophecy of the second coming.³²
4. Miller built on many linking assumptions. *All* of Miller's fifteen "proofs" are nothing more than a chain of assumptions. Many of these are invalid assumptions, contrary to sound Bible study methods. Miller seems to give no thought to this problem. As stated before, and as we will point out again in later chapters, conclusions built upon a chain of assumptions are no better than their weakest assumption. The number of assumptions present in a given argument is inversely proportional, by an exponential ratio, to the possibility that the conclusion will be correct.
5. Miller relied on the accuracy of the "year-day" principle. This is not a valid *biblical* principle of interpretation for all "time" prophecies.³³
6. Miller did not give consideration to the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew. Granted, he was not a

³² One person who reviewed the first draft of this book wrote this note: "It looks like Miller did a concordance study on the number seven and ended up with a 'perfect' mess!"

³³ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. A-118–126.

scholar. Nevertheless, when he was presented with evidence on the meaning of original language which undermined his conclusions, he immediately rejected these with an attitude of cockiness.³⁴

7. Miller built his eschatology around Pagan and Papal Rome. This was common in his day, and still is in many churches, including the Seventh-day Adventist church. The fact remains, however, that Miller *was* wrong. And the continual focus on Rome and the pope was one of the factors leading to his erroneous conclusions.
8. Miller did not practice genuine exegesis, which is letting Scripture speak for itself. It is quite obvious that he reached many of his “proofs” by *reading into* the Bible texts what he wanted to find, rather than reading *out of* the texts what they actually said.

Some of the Old Testament texts that the Millerites used do not appear as prophecies to a modern reader. There are also several explanations which call for the reaction: This is no exegesis at all.³⁵

9. Miller seems to have had no understanding of the difference between the old and new covenants, a problem which exists in the Seventh-day Adventist church to this day. He could leap from some Old Testament text about Israel and immediately apply it to the church.³⁶
10. Miller was not Christ-centered in his interpretation of Scripture. This fact, perhaps more than any other, lies at the foundation of his erroneous conclusions. Speak-

³⁴ See Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 101.

³⁵ Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 3.

³⁶ Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ*, has several chapters dealing with the old and new covenants and how they relate to each other.

ing of Miller's rules of interpretation, Dr. Arasola, says:

Finally, and possibly most significantly, one can consider what is omitted in Miller's rules. They make no mention of Christ, of salvation or of the gospel. This matches the near total lack of devotional writing in Millerite periodicals.³⁷

White, Miller, and the facts

We must now begin to wrestle with the tension between what Ellen White said about Miller, and the facts. Was Miller in fact guided by angels in his search of the prophecies? Was Miller really chosen by God and entrusted with a special message from God?³⁸ Was Miller's mind truly guided by God and connected to the source of wisdom? Did God actually guide Miller to his conclusions? Were Miller's conclusions truly "great light" from heaven?

³⁷ Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 59.

³⁸ Adventists in general, even some who call themselves Evangelical Adventists, continue to hold that while Miller was wrong in his dates for the second coming of Christ, he was, nevertheless, correct in many things: he taught premillennialism, and he used the historicist method of prophetic interpretation—upon which Adventists still rely. They hold that Miller was correct in teaching that October 22, 1844, was the fulfillment of Daniel 8:14 on which the integrity of the SDA movement rests. (From notes of Adventists who read the first draft of this book.) It is acknowledged that in the Miller Movement, many people accepted Christ. We should also give credit to Miller in that he did not accept any fanciful reinterpretation (as did those who became SDAs) to make it appear his predictions were right when they were wrong. Some credit Miller for bringing the message of the second advent of Christ to the Protestant churches, even if his dates were wrong. However, in retrospect, others believe that because of the fanatical excitement and poor hermeneutics used by the Adventists in their proclamation of the second coming of Christ, the Protestant church as a whole was inoculated *against* the doctrine of the soon coming of Christ.

Did God really open up Miller's understanding of the prophecies which had ever been dark to God's people? Did God guide Miller in his discovery of how one text of Scripture opened up the meaning of another, and thus endorse his proof-text method? Did God reveal to Miller a "perfect chain of truth"? Should Miller be associated with the "greats" of Bible history such as Elisha, John the Baptist, and Noah? Could one honestly describe Miller's message as "the everlasting gospel," "the mysteries of the Kingdom of God," "this saving message," and a "heavenly message"? Was Miller truly correct in his multiple periods ending in 1843 and his "many proofs"? Can we say for certain that Miller was not a fanatic? Was Miller's chart, which listed his multiple proofs, exactly as God wanted it? Does God still want it that way? Ellen White said, "It should never be changed."

The foundation has been laid

We are only at the beginning of this book, but those who have accepted Ellen White as a true prophet must begin to wrestle with the facts. Was Miller right or wrong? Was Ellen White right or wrong? The stakes are high and the facts speak for themselves.

Had Ellen White given her support of Miller *before* 1844 one could almost excuse her if she had not claimed to speak for God. However, what she wrote about Miller and his being led by God in his methods and conclusions was written *after* 1844.

It is very doubtful if *any* trained, evangelical scholar would support Miller's methods, or *any* of Miller's conclusions today. But herein lies the beginning of a theological and historical saga that rivals fiction.

Always
learning and
never able to
come to the
knowledge of
the truth

Chapter 5



Right is Wrong— Wrong is Right

For most of us the fact that Miller was wrong is patently evident. However, having grown up on SDA church history and having once accepted the writings of EGW on an equal authority with the Bible, I know how hard it is for some with the same nurturing to face squarely the *fact* that Miller's predictions were wrong, period. Again, let me make it clear that I am not questioning Miller's sincerity or his walk with God. However, truth and sincerity must be weighed on different scales. Regarding Miller's predictions of the second coming, he was *completely* wrong. Many of his proofs relied on Scriptures which were not prophecies at all and had nothing to do with the second coming of Christ. His

methods of interpretation were wrong. He relied on historical sources, some of which were wrong. Every one of his “fifteen proofs” was built on a long string of questionable assumptions. Each doubtful assumption mathematically increases by a geometric ratio the odds against the possibility of a correct conclusion. The fact that Christ did not come in 1843, nor even in 1844 after his “mistake” was “corrected,” is empirical proof that Miller was wrong.

The SDA saga begins!

While some of EGW’s early statements were written before the official organization of the SDA church, nevertheless, *all* of her published writings—even those written before 1863, the official date of denominational organization—are accepted by SDAs as part of the EGW treasured heritage. Ellen White had some very strong statements regarding those who accepted or rejected the 1843 message of Miller. Please note that the emphasis in the following quotations is mine. Any additions added within quotations will be in brackets.

*I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843. It was His design to arouse the people and bring them to a testing point, where they should decide for or against the truth. Thousands were led to embrace the truth preached by William Miller.*¹

Many shepherds of the flock, who professed to love Jesus, said that they had *no opposition to the preaching of Christ’s coming, but they objected to the definite time.*²

Ministers who would not accept this *saving message* [note that in context, this “saving message” refers to the acceptance of

¹ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 232.

² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

a “definite time”] themselves hindered those who would have received it. *The blood of souls is upon them.* Preachers and people joined to oppose *this message from heaven* and to persecute William Miller and those who united with him in the work.³

*The Lord showed me that the 1843 chart was directed by his hand, and that no part of it should be altered; that the figures were as he wanted them. That his hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures, so that none could see it, until his hand was removed.*⁴

The most devoted gladly received the message. They knew it was from God, and that it was delivered at the right time. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the result of the heavenly message [1843 message], and when the churches turned from and rejected it, they in sadness consulted with Jesus. *He turned his face from the churches,* and bid his angels to faithfully watch over the precious ones who did not reject the testimony, for another light was yet to shine upon them.⁵

We must be careful not to pass too quickly over the above quotations. Note carefully what Ellen White states:

1. God directed the setting of 1843 as the date for the second coming.
2. It was God’s design to bring people to a test for or against “the truth.” And “the truth,” in context, is the acceptance of the erroneous *date* of 1843 for the coming of Christ.
3. Miller preached “the truth.”
4. The other ministers of the day did not oppose the preaching of the second coming of Christ, but did oppose the setting of a date. These ministers, said Ellen White, would not accept the “saving message.” There-

³ Ibid., p. 234.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1850-11-01.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 136.

- fore she calls the message of the *date* for the second coming of Christ in 1843, “this saving message.”
5. The ministers who did not embrace the date-setting of Miller and encouraged their members to reject this message are described as having “the blood of souls upon them.”
 6. The message of the 1843 date for the second coming of Christ is said to be a “message from heaven.”
 7. The 1843 prophetic chart which Miller and others used was exactly as God wanted it.
 8. God purposely held His hand over the mistake in the figures in Miller’s 1843 chart.
 9. Jesus turned His face away from the churches which did not accept the 1843, date-setting message.

Evaluation

How shall we evaluate the above facts? To begin, let me say that while I was a pastor in the SDA church, I read and reread these statements many times and *believed them*, because I came to them from the presupposition of the authority of Ellen White. If I had problems with logic, I felt they were from *my* lack of understanding. However, now that I have been out of the SDA church for over fifteen years, I believe I see things a little bit more objectively. Ellen White is doing two things that must be called to our attention.

First, she claims the authority of God. Second, she makes numerous statements which *force* her readers to fully accept what she says or to reject her totally. *There is no other position allowed.* Could this be called *mind control*? Her readers are placed in a position relative to her authority very much the same as men are when they must determine “What do you think of Christ?” Christ is either who He

claimed to be, or else He is the biggest impostor who ever walked the face of the earth. However, with the case of Christ, we have the evidence of hundreds of prophecies which *were* fulfilled. We have many other prophecies which were given by Christ pertaining to the future, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, etc., which *have been fulfilled to the letter* and—to settle the question once and for all—we have the empty tomb.

But how are we to deal with the self-proclaimed authority of Ellen White? She says Miller was right, when he was wrong. She says he taught truth, when he taught error. She says that God guided Miller's mind and led him to his conclusions, which in retrospect were false. His chart, that proved to be erroneous, she said was just how God wanted it and no changes were ever to be made to it. More than that, she said that God held His hand over the mistake in Miller's chart. In so doing, she makes God a partner in deception! Ellen White states that Jesus turned His face away from the churches which did not accept Miller's date-setting message, which proved to be wrong. The worst thing, however, in all of her statements listed above, is not only a misunderstanding of the gospel, but *a perversion of the gospel*. She calls the 1843 date-setting message a "saving message." The fact that she believed this, is shown conversely when she said that pastors who kept their flocks from accepting the date-setting message of Miller, "have the blood of souls on them." This is *not* the gospel. While we will deal more fully with this in later chapters, we ought to remember clearly what Paul said when the Galatians strayed away from the new covenant gospel of God's grace—belief and trust in the perfect life, death and resurrection of Christ on behalf of sinful man.

But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.⁶

Paul was so emphatic about those who pervert the gospel that he stated his warning twice. Ellen White speaks about an “angel” coming to Miller and guiding his mind into the “truth” of date setting. Paul says that even if “an angel from heaven” were to preach a different gospel, “let him be accursed.”

The 1843 “truth” becomes the 1844 “truth”

The next step in the unfolding drama was when 1843 came and went, but Christ did not come. In checking their figures the Millerites found that they had not accounted for the fact that there was no year zero between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D.,⁷ therefore, instead of Christ coming in 1843 as they had predicted, He now was to come in 1844.

Soon another event electrified Miller’s followers. While Miller had used Daniel 8:14 coupled with Daniel 9, to prove Christ was to come in 1843 (see Miller’s proof number 7 in the previous chapter), they now found a “connection” of this prophecy with the “cleansing” of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary in Leviticus 16. That connection came from a mistranslation⁸ found in the wording of the King James Bible in Daniel 8:14.

⁶ Gal. 1:8, 9.

⁷ Again, I have found no original source for this, but this is what I was taught in Adventist schools.

⁸ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 215ff., for a discussion of the linguistic problems of “cleansed.”

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be *cleansed*.

Using their proof-text method of interpretation, disregarding the context of the “cleansing” of Daniel 8:14, which deals with the restoration of the temple services after Antiochus Epiphanies had desecrated them, they reasoned that if the “cleansing” of Daniel 8:14 pointed forward to the coming of Christ, as Miller taught, and Leviticus 16 mentioned the cleansing of the sanctuary in connection with the Day of Atonement, then Christ’s coming must take place on the exact day prescribed for the Day of Atonement. This, they concluded, was the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month which they were led to believe was on October 22, 1844. Now, not only did they have the year of Christ’s return, they also had it nailed down to a specific day! Miller at first opposed the “seventh-month movement,” but later joined it. The enthusiasm generated by this “new light” spread like wild fire.

The 1844 message said to be endorsed by God

Those faithful, disappointed ones, who could not understand why their Lord did not come, were not left in darkness. Again they were led to their Bibles to search the prophetic periods. *The hand of the Lord was removed from the figures, and the mistake was explained.* They saw that the prophetic periods [note that Ellen White mentions periods, referring to the *many proofs* of Miller] reached to 1844, and that the same evidence they had presented to show that the prophetic periods closed in 1843, proved that they would terminate in 1844. Light from the word of God shone upon their position, and they discovered a tarrying time.—If the vision tarry, wait for it.—In their love for Jesus’ immediate coming, they had overlooked the tarrying of the vision, which was calculated to manifest the true waiting ones. Again they had a point of time. Yet I saw that many of them

could not rise above their severe disappointment, to possess that degree of zeal and energy which had marked their faith in 1843.⁹

Satan and his angels triumphed over them, and those who would not receive the message, congratulated themselves upon their far-seeing judgment and wisdom in not receiving the delusion, as they called it. They realized not that they were *rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, and that they were working in union with Satan and his angels to perplex God's people, who were living out the heaven-born message.*¹⁰

The churches would not receive the light of the first angel's message [the context makes it clear that the "first angel's message" is the 1843 date-setting message], and as they *rejected the light from heaven they fell from the favor of God.* They trusted in their own strength, and placed themselves *by their opposition to the first message where they could not see the light of the second angel's message.* [In context the "second angel's message" is the call to leave the "fallen churches" who rejected the date setting of the Millerites and were dubbed "Babylon." It was first preached in the summer of 1844,¹¹ therefore, it was closely connected with the "seventh-month movement" which held October 22, 1844, as the day for the second coming of Christ.] *But the beloved of God, who were oppressed, answered to the message, Babylon is fallen, and left the fallen churches.*¹²

...the great mass seemed to be stirred against this message, and manifested the spirit of Satan. They mocked and scoffed, and everywhere was heard, *No man knoweth the day and the hour.*¹³

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 139.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 389.

¹² Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 140.

¹³ Ibid., p. 142.

The 1844 message was wrong

Once again, it is easy for those who have not grown up on SDA history, or have never accepted the writings of Ellen White, to clearly see the error of the 1844 message. Based upon the fifteen proofs of Miller, coupled with the new light of “the seventh-month movement” which pinned the date to October 22, 1844, the Millerites predicted Christ would come on that day. He did not. They were wrong. They were just as wrong as the recent books, *88 Reasons Why the Rapture will be in 1988*;¹⁴ *Rapture, the Return of Jesus Christ on Oct. 28, 1992*;¹⁵ or *1994*^{16,17}

Some SDAs reading this will hasten to add, “No they were not wrong. Only the event was wrong; the prophesied coming was fulfilled, but it was in a different place.” The Bible tells us to be babes in evil, but in our thinking we are to be mature. If their prophecy was that Christ would come *to the earth*—and that is what it was—and if Christ did not come *to the earth*—and he did not—their prophecy was wrong.

Today, if some psychic were to make a prediction that an earthquake was going to take place in Los Angeles on a certain day, and on that day there was a tremor in Japan, would that psychic be correct? No. Miller and his followers predicted that Christ would come *to the earth* on October 22, 1844. Christ did not come. They were wrong.

¹⁴ By Edgar C. Wisenant.

¹⁵ By the Mission for The Coming Days.

¹⁶ By Harold Camping of Family Radio.

¹⁷ It is of interest that these books which predicted the date of the rapture used some of the same “prophecies” Miller did. These books also display the same allegorical, proof-text method of interpretation with the same results: they were wrong.

Evaluation of the 1844 “truth”

Again we are forced to either accept the authority of Ellen White’s statements and reject all logic and reason, or we *must* recognize that her statements are *totally erroneous*. She appears to be arguing for error. She places those who were *right* in rejecting the erroneous date-setting messages as being in the camp of Satan. She clearly indicates that this erroneous date-setting message was a “message born from heaven.” She dubs the churches who rejected the false message of date setting, “Babylon”—a term for confusion, and a symbol for the camp of Satan. One wonders which side had the confusion? We must clearly see what is taking place. Ellen White is speaking as a “messenger of God,” with the “truth of God,” and “the authority of God”—and attributing to God the errors of the date-setting message of the Millerites who were wrong.

Chapter Summary

1. Ellen White said Miller was right in his 1843 message when he was wrong.
2. Ellen White said those who rejected Miller’s erroneous 1843 message were working on the side of Satan and were rejected by God.
3. Ellen White said Miller’s 1843 chart was just as God wanted it and it should never be changed, although it was wrong.
4. Ellen White said God held his hand over the mistake in Miller’s 1843 chart, thus making God a partner in their deception.
5. Ellen White said that as soon as God removed his hand which covered the mistake in Miller’s 1843 chart, the Millerites discovered their error, thus corroborating the

fact that she makes God at least partially responsible for their error.

6. Ellen White said that all the prophecies—probably Miller’s 15 proofs—which pointed to the 1843 date, then *correctly* pointed to the 1844 date.¹⁸
7. Ellen White said that when Christians repeated to the Millerites the words of Jesus in Mark 13:32, “no man knoweth the day and the hour,” they were manifesting the spirit of Satan.
8. Ellen White said the 1844 message was a “saving message” and “a message from heaven.”
9. Pastors who rejected Miller’s erroneous message were said to have “the blood of souls” upon them.
10. Churches who rejected Miller’s false 1844 message were dubbed “Babylon,” and were understood to be apostate, “fallen” churches.
11. The bottom line: What Ellen White said was right, was wrong. What she said was wrong, was right.

¹⁸ It is not clear if Ellen White endorsed all of Miller’s fifteen “proofs.” We do know that she spoke of *multiple* prophetic periods on several occasions. She also said that *all* the evidence supporting the 1843 date applied correctly to the 1844 date. We also know that on Miller’s chart there were at least six, some think all fifteen, of his proofs. See Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 138, 139, and Arasola, *The End of Historicism*, p. 221

The word
spoken
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Chapter 6



“Truth” Changes— Again!

The followers of Miller, including Ellen White, who later became Seventh-day Adventists, have given a number of reasons why Christ did not come in 1843. Among these are the following:

God wanted to test the people on a point of “truth”

I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843. It was his design to arouse the people, and bring them to a *testing point* where they should decide.¹

¹ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 133.

God wanted them to be disappointed

I saw the people of God, joyful in expectation, looking for their Lord. But *God designed to prove them. His hand covered a mistake* in the reckoning of the prophetic periods. Those who were looking for their Lord did not discover it...*God designed that his people should meet with a disappointment.*²

The vision tarried

The hand of the Lord was removed from the figures, and the mistake was explained. They saw that the prophetic periods reached to 1844, and that the same evidence which they had presented to show that the prophetic periods closed in 1843, proved that they would terminate in 1844. *Light from the Word of God shone upon their position, and they discovered a tarrying time*—"Though it [the vision] tarry, wait for it."^{3,4}

One wonders why God wanted to *test* His people, to see if they loved Him, on a point of "truth" that was really error. Ellen White makes God responsible for the disappointment: EGW said God held his hand over the mistake and it was His design that His people meet with disappointment. Then the vision (2300 days of Daniel 8:14) was seen to tarry—go past its terminal position. And yet, EGW says it actually did not tarry!

The vision did *not* tarry

It was not at first perceived that if the decree did not go forth at the beginning of the year 457 B.C., the 2300 years would not be completed at the close of 1843. But it was ascertained that the decree was given near the close of the year 457 B.C., and

² Ibid., p. 137.

³ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 236.

⁴ This is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:3. In context it has to do with the vision of Habakkuk regarding the coming invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans. It has nothing to do with Daniel 8:14, the coming of Christ or the heavenly sanctuary.

therefore the prophetic period must reach to the fall of the year 1844. Therefore the vision of time *did not tarry*, though it had seemed to do so. We learned to rest upon the language of the prophet. “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, *it will not tarry*.”^{5,6}

With the problem of the first disappointment now “clearly explained,” we move to the great disappointment. When Christ did not come on October 22, 1844, it was devastating—at first. We now come to the foundation of what I have called the “cultic doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists,” which is the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. Before we consider the source for this doctrine, several things should be said both in review and as an introduction:

- This doctrine continues to build on the “truth” that October 22, 1844, is a valid interpretation of Daniel 8:14,⁷ one of Miller’s fifteen questionable “proofs.”
- This doctrine is a *reinterpretation* of the “seventh-month movement” which predicted Christ would come to the earth on October 22, 1844.
- This doctrine did *not* originate through diligent Bible study.
- This doctrine is completely unknown in all of Christian theology and history.
- This doctrine came through a “vision” to Hiram Edson, a man who was neither known beforehand nor afterward to manifest the true gift of prophecy, nor to have any other visions which could be tested for validity.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 52.

⁶ “The prophet” here is Habakkuk, not Daniel. We still see wild proof-texting place. No regard is given to context.

⁷ This will be evaluated in Chapter 10.

- This “vision” came on October 23, 1844, the morning after the great disappointment, at a time of extreme emotional instability among the Adventists.⁸
- This doctrine was first written out by O.R.L. Crosier who soon renounced it as error.
- This doctrine came packaged in a theological mix of gross error.

The following is a quotation from a manuscript written by Hiram Edson, the person who had the sanctuary vision.

After breakfast [on October 23, the day after the disappointment] I said to one of my brethren, “Let us go and see, and encourage some of our brn [brethren]. We started, and while passing through a large field I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly, and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that he for the *first time* entered on that day the second apartment of the sanctuary; and that he had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth....

While I was thus standing in the midst of the field, my comrade passed on almost beyond speaking distance before missing me. He inquired, “Why I was stopping so long?” I replied, “The Lord was answering our morning prayer; by giving light with regard to our disappointment.” I talked these things to my brethren....

Br. Hahn and myself, held a consultation with regard to the propriety of sending out the light on the subject of the sanctuary. We decided it was just what the scattered remnant needed; for *it would explain our disappointment*, and set the brethren on the right track. We agreed to share the expense between us, and said to Crosier, “Write out the subject of the sanctuary. Get out another number of the Day Dawn, and we will try to meet the expense. He did so, and the Day Dawn was sent out bearing the

⁸ “They were unable to find their bearings...” See Editor’s Note in *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 499.

light of the sanctuary subject. It fell into the hands of Elders James White, and Joseph Bates, who readily endorsed the view; and *it was shown in vision [to EGW] to be the light for the remnant.*⁹

Some time later, O.L.R. Crosier wrote out a lengthy article on the subject of the sanctuary and published it in *The Day Star Extra* of February 7, 1846, entitled, "The Law of Moses." Of interest to our study are comments he makes relative to the ministry of Christ in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary and his teaching regarding the scapegoat. These points bear directly on the theology of what will become the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. Crosier's conclusions on the ministry of Christ are laden with massive error.

But again they say the atonement was made and finished on Calvary, when the Lamb of God expired. So men have taught us, and so the churches and world believe; but it is none the more true or sacred on that account, if unsupported by Divine authority. Perhaps a few or none who hold that opinion have ever tested the foundation on which it rests.¹⁰

1. If the atonement was made on Calvary, by whom was it made? The making of the atonement is the work of a Priest; but who officiated on Calvary? Roman soldiers and wicked Jews.

2. The slaying of the victim was not making the atonement; the sinner slew the victim, Lev. 4:1-4, 13-15, &c., after that the Priest took the blood and made the atonement. Lev. 4:5-12, 16-21.

3. Christ was the appointed High Priest to make the atonement, and he certainly could not have acted in that capacity till after his resurrection, and we have no record of his doing anything on earth after his resurrection, which could be called the atonement.

⁹ Hiram Edson, undated, handwritten Manuscript Fragment, reproduced in Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 126.

¹⁰ O.R.L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," printed in *The Day-Star Extra*, Feb. 7, 1846, p. 41, reproduced in, *Ibid.*, p. 152.

4. The atonement was made in the Sanctuary, but Calvary was not such a place.

5. He could not, according to Heb. 8:4, make the atonement while on earth, "If he were on earth, he should not be a Priest." The Levitical was the earthly priesthood, the Divine, the heavenly.

6. Therefore, he did not *begin* the work of making the atonement, whatever the nature of that work may be, till after his ascension, when by his own blood he entered his heavenly Sanctuary for us...

After quoting Acts 2:38, Crosier continues:

Now put by the side of this text another on this point from his [Peter's] discourse at the 9th hour of the same day, Ac. 3:19, "Repent ye therefore; and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."...Every one can see that *the blotting out of sins does not take place at repentance and conversion*; but follows and must of necessity be preceded by them. Repentance, conversion, and baptism had then become imperative duties in the present tense; and when performed, those doing them "washed away" (Ac. 22:16,) remitted or sent away from them their sins. (Acts 2:28;) [(sic.) Acts 2:38] and of course are forgiven and have "received the atonement;" but *they had not received it [the atonement] entire at that time, because their sins were not yet blotted out....*¹¹

The cleansing of the Sanctuary did not finish the cleansing of the people; for, after the Scape-goat had born away all iniquities of the people, the high priest had yet to offer the burnt-offerings and burn the fat of the sin-offering on the altar in the court which formed a part of the atonement of the day and **it required the whole atonement of the day to cleanse the people**; Lev. 16:22-30.¹²

Crosier also sees "the scapegoat as a type of Satan."¹³ This is the origin for the Seventh-day Adventist interpreta-

¹¹ Ibid., p. 152.

¹² Ibid., p. 153.

¹³ Ibid., p. 154.

tion that Satan is represented by the scapegoat in the Leviticus 16 Day of Atonement service.¹⁴

Summary of Crosier’s “Truth”

At this point we must summarize our findings: Crosier, writing out the theology of Hiram Edson and F.B. Hahn,¹⁵ reached a number of conclusions, among them:

1. Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary for *the first time* on October 22, 1844.
2. *No* atonement was made at the cross.
3. Atonement is made by the High Priest *in the heavenly sanctuary*.
4. The blotting out of sins does *not* take place at the point of repentance and conversion.
5. *The atonement is not complete* until Christ lays the sins upon Satan, who is represented by the scapegoat in the Levitical Day of Atonement.
6. The atonement is not complete until *after* the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary which *started* October 22, 1844.

Evaluation

While the biblical evaluation of the SDA cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is reserved for a later chapter, it should be noted that few, if

¹⁴ Seventh-day Adventists believe that the scapegoat, in the Leviticus 16 Day of Atonement service, represents Satan. They teach that the blood of Christ transfers the record of the sins of the righteous to the heavenly sanctuary. Then at the close of the investigative judgment, these sins are placed on the head of Satan who will ultimately bear the penalty for them.

¹⁵ See their endorsement of this article, in *The Day-Star Extra*, Feb. 7, 1846, p. 44, reproduced in Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 155.

any, evangelical scholars would agree with *any* of the above statements. Most would consider them to be gross error, if not outright heresy. However, note how Ellen White evaluated this new theology, this changing “truth.”

The Lord has shown me in vision; that Jesus rose up, and shut the door, and entered the Holy of Holies, at the 7th [Jewish] month 1844....

I believe the Sanctuary, to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, is the New Jerusalem Temple, of which Christ is a minister. The Lord shew (sic) in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the *true light*, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, &c; [please note the “&c” (etc.)—referring to the other points of his “truth”] and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the Day-Star, Extra, February 7, 1846. *I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that Extra to every saint.*¹⁶

Many Evangelical Adventists would totally reject this “vision” of Edson, and its accompanying theology, as Crosier, himself quickly did.¹⁷ However, it should be noted that leading SDA denominational writers *still* see this “revelation” to Edson as the work of God. Dr. Roy Adams in his book, *The Sanctuary*, commenting on Edson’s vision states:

Despite Edson’s tears, the following morning *God broke through as best He could*. In Edson’s words: ‘Heaven seemed open to my

¹⁶ *A Word to the “Little Flock”*, as reproduced in Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 171.

¹⁷ “The first to find fault with the Adventist sanctuary teachings was its creator—O.R.L. Crosier. Damsteegt tells us concerning him, ‘In 1846 he accepted the Sabbath but soon repudiated it together with his sanctuary teachings.’” See P. G. Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Erdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 23 as quoted in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 29. D. M. Canright states, “The theory of the sanctuary in heaven they accepted from Elder O.R.L. Crosier, who afterwards repudiated it.” Canright, *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 66.

view, and I saw distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, he *for the first time* entered on that day the second apartment of the sanctuary....” This position was adopted by the group of Millerites who later became known as Seventh-day Adventists. *Historically it has held an important place in our system of beliefs.*¹⁸

This “truth” of the change of ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary as a fulfillment of Daniel 8:14, is the foundation of Adventist theology. It is vitally important to remember that this “truth” did *not* come from diligent, rational Bible study. Rather, it came as a “vision” to Edson. Just as the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 came in a setting of Miller’s erroneous fifteen “proofs,” so their sanctuary theology came in a setting of gross, theological error.

However, some leading Adventists still cling to Edson’s “truth,” although they state it in slightly different terms. For example, Dr. Roy Adams states:

At the end of the prophetic period of Daniel 8:14, Christ commenced a phase of ministry that was new in kind—and one that had as its goal the final vindication of God’s name and honor, the vindication of God’s sanctuary and people, and the eternal security of the universe....We stand on their [SDA pioneers] brave and inspiring shoulders now, and *without altering a single plank of the basic pillars of faith*, [his emphasis] we do indeed perceive a clearer vision....Perhaps a better way, then, of expressing the *same* [his emphasis] truth that came to Hiram Edson on that tear-filled morning would be as follows: At the Ascension, Christ went into the presence of God (and in saying this, we are in line with the New Testament) and

¹⁸ Dr. Roy Adams, *The Sanctuary, Understanding the Heart of Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1993) pp. 106, 107.

there commenced a “first-apartment ministry” (in line with the ancient typical service). At the end of the 2300 days (years) in 1844 (in line with the book of Daniel), He commenced a “second-apartment ministry” (in line with the ancient typical service on the Day of Atonement)—namely, the restoration or vindication or cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary (in line with Leviticus 16 and Daniel 8:14).

As we evaluate what took place in early Adventism, we note the changing nature of “truth.” The “first angel’s message” was the “truth” that Christ would come in 1843. The “second angel’s message” was the call for the faithful to “come out of Babylon”—the churches which rejected the date-setting of the Millerites. This second message was preached simultaneously with the seventh-month movement, which predicted that Christ would come to the earth on October 22, 1844. Now, using the same prophecies of Daniel 8:14, coupled with Leviticus 16, the “truth” is that Christ, instead of coming to this earth at the close of the 2300 day prophecy, entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary *for the first time*. Here Christ was to “complete the atonement” which was not complete at the cross, and blot out sins which were not blotted out at the point of repentance and faith.

In Chapter 5 it was documented how Ellen White said that the pastors who rejected the date-setting message of the Millerites were working against God, were on the side of Satan, that the face of Jesus was turned from them, and that they had the blood of souls upon them for their error. She also dubbed those churches, which rejected the seventh month movement, as “Babylon.”

Now, these messages have all been reinterpreted. The “truth” is no longer that Christ was to come to the earth, but that on exactly October 22, 1844, Christ, *for the first time*,

entered into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to *finish the atonement*.

By this time many of the Millerites who had been twice disappointed renounced the whole package of date-setting.¹⁹ Miller himself realized that his predictions were wrong. He continued to believe that Christ’s coming was soon, but he never accepted the heavenly sanctuary reinterpretation of Daniel 8:14 promoted by the small group of Millerites, many of whom later became the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church.²⁰

Of interest to us at this point are the statements of Ellen White regarding those who did *not* accept the “new light” of Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary.

Prophecy was fulfilled in the first and second angels’ messages. They were given at the right time, and accomplished the work *God designed* they should.²¹

I was then shown the grievous disappointment of the people of God. They did not see Jesus at the expected time. They knew not why their Saviour did not come. They could see no evidence why prophetic time had not ended. Said an angel, Has God’s word failed? Has God failed to fulfill his promises? No: he has fulfilled all he promised. Jesus has risen up, and has shut the door of the Holy place of the heavenly Sanctuary, and has opened a door into the Most Holy place, and has entered in to cleanse the Sanctuary. Said the angel, All who wait patiently shall understand the mystery. *Man has erred*; but there has been no failure on the part of God. All was accomplished that God promised; but *man erroneously* looked to the earth, believing it to be the Sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the prophetic periods. Man’s expectations have failed; but God’s promise not at all. Jesus sent his angels to direct the disappointed ones, to lead their minds into the Most Holy place where he had gone to cleanse the Sanctuary, and make *a special atonement* for Israel.

¹⁹ See Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 166, 167.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

*Jesus told the angels that all who found him would understand the work which he was to perform.*²²

One is led to wonder how it was that men “erred” and had come to “*erroneously*” look to the earth as the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the prophetic periods. Was this not the “truth” that the angels of God revealed to Miller? Was this not the teaching of Miller’s charts, which were shown to be just as God wanted them? Was it not this error that the Christian pastors rejected, whom Ellen White said had the blood of souls upon them for not accepting? What has happened to the “perfect chain of truth”?

I was then shown what did take place in heaven as the prophetic periods ended in 1844. I saw that as the ministration of Jesus in the Holy place ended, and he closed the door of that apartment, *a great darkness settled upon those who had heard, and had rejected the messages of Christ’s coming, and they lost sight of him.*²³

The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the Most Holy place where Jesus *stands* before the ark, making his *final intercession* for all those for whom mercy still lingers, and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. This *atonement* is made for the righteous dead as well as for the righteous living. Jesus makes an *atonement for those who died, not receiving the light upon God’s commandments, who sinned ignorantly.*²⁴

We begin to see all “truth” seems to revolve around the understanding of this little flock of Adventists. Even though Ellen White never originated a single doctrine of Adventism,²⁵ her writings hold the central position in shap-

²² Ibid., p. 158.

²³ Ibid., pp. 158, 159.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 163.

²⁵ “Neither he [James White] or his wife ever originated a single doctrine held by the Seventh-day Adventists. The doctrine of the second advent they received from Miller; and all prophetic dates they accepted

ing and defining the center of “present truth.”²⁶ EGW apparently thinks that the “light upon God’s commandments,” which the little band of Adventists discovered, is something that was not known by Christians throughout history. I believe she is referring specifically to the seventh-day Sabbath. After this little group discovered this “truth,” then Adventists taught that all the world became accountable to God for the Sabbath.²⁷ We begin to see a pattern worked out over and over again in SDA history. Things were right as long as EGW had not been “shown by God” that they were wrong. They became wrong when *she* said they were wrong, even if she had previously said they were right.²⁸

from him exactly as he arranged them. The Sabbath they took from Bates....The theory of the sanctuary in heaven they accepted from Elder O. L. R. Crosier....Later they accepted from Andrews the theory of the three messages and the two horned beast, as applied to the United States. The sleep of the dead they got from the First-day Adventists.” Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 66.

²⁶ It should be noted that Ellen White, herself, initiated little, if any new “truth.” Usually, other Adventists discovered “truth” and she then corroborated it and gave it “divine” authority through her “visions.” See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, pp. 69, 70.

²⁷ “I saw that the present test on the Sabbath could not come until the mediation of Jesus in the holy place was finished and He had passed within the second veil; therefore Christians who fell asleep before the door was opened into the most holy, when the midnight cry was finished, at the seventh month, 1844, and who had not kept the true Sabbath, now rest in hope; for they had not the light and the test on the Sabbath which we now have since that door was opened. I saw that Satan was tempting some of God’s people on this point. Because so many good Christians have fallen asleep in the triumphs of faith and have not kept the true Sabbath, they were doubting about its being a test for us now.” Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 42.

²⁸ For example, some Seventh-day Adventists were promoting giving up eating pork because of the old covenant laws on clean and unclean meats. Ellen White, however, opposed them. Later, after she had been

EGW often uses the terms first, second and third messages or angels' messages. By the term "the first angel's message" she means the 1843 message of Miller.²⁹ By the term "the second angel's message" she means the call to come out of Babylon—the fallen churches³⁰ that rejected the Millerite date-setting—coupled with the revised, "corrected," 1844 message of the Millerites.^{31,32} By the term "the third angel's message" she means the reinterpreted, revised October 22, 1844, message that

shown "by God" the "truth" of this matter, then she insisted that eating pork was wrong, and all SDAs should give it up. Truth seems to be founded not in diligent Bible study, but by her "revelations from God." "I saw that your views concerning swine's flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourselves; but in your judgment and opinion you have made this question a test, and your actions have plainly shown your faith in this matter. If God requires His people to abstain from swine's flesh, He will convict them on the matter [give Ellen White a vision]. He is just as willing to show His honest children their duty, as to show their duty to individuals upon whom He has not laid the burden of His work. If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His church their duty....I saw that you both must speedily be brought where *you are willing to be led, instead of desiring to lead*, or Satan will step in and lead you in his way, to follow his counsel. Some look at your set notions, and consider them an evidence of humility. They are deceived. You both are making work for repentance." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, pp. 206, 207. We should note that the real problem was that these people were seeking to lead. In doing so, they were usurping EGW's role, and, therefore, received her condemnation.

²⁹ See Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 133–140.

³⁰ Both Catholic and Protestant churches.

³¹ It appears that EGW connected the second angel's message, which technically was the call to come out of Babylon, with the "midnight cry, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh,'" which was the seventh-month movement or the reinterpretation of 1843, to October 22, 1844. See *Spiritual Gifts*, pp. 140, 141.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 140–143.

teaches Christ’s change in ministry in the heavenly sanctuary coupled with the “truth” of the seventh-day Sabbath.³³ Some of these terms Adventists will later reinterpret *again*, but for now this is “present truth.”

Many who embraced the third message had not an experience in the two former messages. Satan understood this, and *his evil eye was upon them to overthrow them*; but the third angel was pointing them to the Most Holy place, and those who had an experience in the past messages were pointing them the way to the heavenly Sanctuary. *Many saw the perfect chain of truth in the angels’ messages, and gladly received it.* They embraced them in their order, and followed Jesus by faith into the heavenly Sanctuary. *These messages were represented to me as an anchor to hold the body. And as individuals receive and understand them, they are shielded against the many delusions of Satan.*³⁴

EGW again mentions the “perfect chain of truth” in these three messages. This seems difficult to comprehend. She has just mentioned the “errors” and “erroneous” conclusions of man which are exactly what was taught in the two former messages. She states that these messages are an “anchor for the body” and their acceptance will prevent one from being deluded by Satan.

I then saw Wm. Miller. He looked perplexed, and was bowed with sorrow and distress for his people. He saw the company who were united and loving in 1844, losing their love for each other, and opposing one another. He saw them fall back into a cold, backslidden state. Grief wasted his strength. I saw leading men watching Wm. Miller, and fearing lest he should embrace the third angel’s message and the commandments of God [meaning in context, especially the seventh-day Sabbath]. And as he would lean towards the light from heaven, these men would lay some plan to draw his mind away. I saw a human influence exerted to keep his mind in darkness, and to retain his influence among them. At length Wm. Miller raised his voice

³³ Ibid., pp. 162–168.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 165, 166.

against the light from heaven [the reinterpretation of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14]. He failed in not receiving the message which would have fully explained his disappointment, and cast a light and glory on the past, which would have revived his exhausted energies, brightened up his hope, and led him to glorify God. But he leaned to human wisdom instead of divine, and being broken with arduous labor in his Master's cause, and by age, *he was not as accountable* as those who kept him from the truth. They are responsible, and the sin rests upon them.³⁵

For Ellen White, the veracity of these messages becomes the cornerstone for all future Adventist theology. She will never admit that she was wrong in her statements about God's leading. These messages became, and remain, the testing truth for all of Adventism.

I was shown three steps—one, two and three—the first, second and third angels' messages. Said the angel, Woe to him who shall move a block, or stir a pin in these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. *The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.* I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. Step by step had God brought them along, until he had placed them upon *a solid, immovable platform*. Then I saw individuals as they approached the platform, before stepping upon it examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the laying of the foundation of the platform. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform and examined it, then found fault with it, declaring it to be laid wrong. I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform, and exhorted others who had stepped off to cease their complaints, for *God was the master-builder, and they were fighting against him.* They recounted the wonderful work of God, which had led them to the firm platform, and in union

³⁵ Ibid., p. 168.

nearly all raised their eyes to heaven, and with a loud voice glorified God. This affected some of those who had complained, and left the platform, and again they with humble look stepped upon it.³⁶

This statement cements into Adventist teaching the veracity of what is called “the great second advent movement” of Miller. It locks in the October 22, 1844, date as the fulfillment of Daniel 8:14, and the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, as a perfect platform of truth. It condemns all who would even examine this platform.³⁷ More than that, it undermines the gospel by making “testing truths” out of dates and speculative interpretation. EGW states that those who step off this platform of “truth” are “fighting against God.” She says that “the destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.”

One evangelical pastor added this note from his review of the first draft of this book.

It [referring to the quotation of EGW above] also undermines the rules of logic and epistemology making rational discourse and sensible exegesis impossible. The *only* thing SDAs have is EGW. Clearly it is EGW *or* the Bible.³⁸

According to EGW the *experience* of the early Advent movement is never to be renounced and the *doctrines that came out of that experience* are never to be changed. In the

³⁶ Ibid., p. 169.

³⁷ This is another example of the mind control exerted by Ellen White. If God had revealed to her that these three messages are truth, then no one is even to examine the evidence. This is *not* the teaching of Scripture. Paul praised the Bereans for testing his teachings with the Scriptures. (Acts 17:11). This type of mind control is, however, the practice of many cults.

³⁸ Dr. Bud Brown, Pastor, West Sedona Baptist Church.

following quotation she sets forth this experience and these doctrines as the supreme truth.

We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God's Word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar of the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake. He who makes such an application knows not the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages that have come to the people of God.³⁹

A careful analysis of the above quotation will show that EGW is making the *experience* of the early Adventists normative. This *experience* appears to take precedence over the Scriptures.

I believe Seventh-day Adventists ought to give serious consideration to what has been presented thus far. There will be some, without doubt, who will condemn me for even examining this "platform of truth." Elsewhere, however, Ellen White states:

Some have feared that if in even a single point they acknowledge themselves in error, other minds would be led to doubt the whole theory of truth. Therefore they have felt that investigation should not be permitted; that it would tend to dissension and disunion. But if such is to be the result of investigation, the sooner it comes the better. If there are those whose faith in God's word will not stand the test of an investigation of the Scriptures, the sooner they are revealed the better; for then the way will be opened to show them their error. *We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not,*

³⁹ Ellen G. White, from the pamphlet, *Call to the Watchman*, 1910, p. 20.

under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is but one who is infallible,—He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.⁴⁰

We should recognize, however, that *anytime* someone would point out the errors in her understanding of the three angels’ messages, she would immediately condemn them.⁴¹ Also, the context of the above statement is not concerned with the “truth” *she* had received “from heaven,” but with what *others* believed.

Chapter Summary

1. Ellen White endorsed, in the strongest terms, the reinterpretation of the 1844 message of Edson and Crosier. She said that “The Lord shew (sic) her in vision...that Brother Crosier had the *true light* on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, &c.” She said, “I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that *Extra* to every saint.”
2. The article published in the *Day Star Extra*, to which EGW referred, is full of doctrinal errors which undermine the gospel. These are that:
 - a. Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary for the *first time* on October 22, 1844.
 - b. Christ made *no* atonement for sin at the cross.
 - c. The blotting out of sins does *not* take place at the point of repentance and conversion.
 - d. The atonement is *not complete* until Christ lays the sins of *the righteous* upon the head of *Satan*, which takes place *after* the cleansing of the sanctuary which *started* on October 22, 1844.
3. Dr. Roy Adams, associate editor of the *Adventist Review*, states that God “broke through as best He

⁴⁰ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 125.

⁴¹ See Ellen G. White, *Loma Linda Manuscript*, 1881, No. 149.

- could” in revealing to Edson the “truth” of the heavenly sanctuary.
4. Dr. Roy Adams says that Adventists can stand on the brave and inspiring shoulders of the Adventist pioneers, such as Edson, “without altering a single plank of the basic pillars of [the SDA] faith.”
 5. Regarding the first and second messages, Ellen White said “man has erred” and “man erroneously looked to the earth” as the place to which Christ was to come. However, these were exactly the “truths” which Miller preached and EGW later endorsed through her “visions” from God.
 6. EGW stated that the first, second, and third angels’ messages were “a perfect chain of truth” even though they disagreed with one another.
 7. EGW said these three messages were “an anchor to hold the body.”
 8. EGW said that the acceptance of these three messages would be a shield “against the many delusions of Satan.”
 9. EGW said that the destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which these three messages are received.
 10. EGW said that these three messages were a “solid, immovable platform.”
 11. EGW said that those who found fault with these three messages were fighting against God.
 12. EGW made the experience of the early Adventists normative for interpreting the Scripture; any scriptural arguments to the contrary were wrong.

Chapter 7



The Swinging Door

After the disappointment of 1844, the Millerite movement split into two groups. One group, which Miller later joined, recognized that nothing really happened on October 22, 1844,¹ and continued to look for the soon coming of Christ. These Adventists rejected the sanctuary reinterpretation of the 1844 message and became known as “open-door Adventists.”² The other group reinterpreted the prophecy of the 2300 days to apply to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, believed the door of mercy was shut, and became known as “shut-door Adventists.” From this latter group came the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church.³ The purpose of this

¹ Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, pp. 131, 132.

² *Ibid.*, p. 131.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 132.

chapter is to document what I call “the swinging door,” which traces this group’s developing understanding of “truth” from 1844 to 1851.

There were several “doors” in early Adventist theology. However, *at first* all these doors referred to the belief that “the door of mercy” was shut, or that probation had closed. “The close of probation” is a term well known in Adventist circles and refers to a point in time when salvation will no longer be available.

The Millerites believed that the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1–12 applied to their experience. They had given the cry, “Behold the Bridegroom,” as they expected Christ to come to the earth on October 22, 1844. The shut-door Adventists, who continued to believe that October 22, 1844, marked an important milestone in prophetic fulfillment, proceeded to build on the parable of the ten virgins. In the parable “those who were ready went in with him into the marriage feast; and the door was shut.”⁴ Believing themselves to be the only ones who were ready, they taught that those who rejected the October 22, 1844, message were typified by the foolish virgins of the parable who, upon knocking at the door, were told by the Bridegroom, “I do not know you.”

In other words, the “little flock” or “Advent band,” as they called themselves, were the only ones for whom mercy was still available. For all the rest, the door was shut.

Simultaneous with the shut door of the parable of the ten virgins, the shut-door Adventists believed that Christ shut the door to the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary by moving into the second apartment. Ellen White “saw” this

⁴ See Mt. 25:10.

change take place.⁵ The foolish virgins—everyone except the Advent band—then no longer could benefit from Christ’s atonement in heaven because they were unaware that Christ had moved from one apartment to the next. Therefore, as stated earlier, the “door” of the parable of the ten virgins and the “door” of the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary were both “shut doors” for those who did not accept the reinterpretation of the 2300 day prophecy.

With this short introduction we will give the evidence for the “swinging door.”

The door shuts—the first swing

On October 22, 1844, Adventists⁶ believed that the door of mercy slammed shut for all those who did not accept their reinterpretation of the 2300 day prophecy.

⁵ “I was then shown what did take place in heaven as the prophetic periods ended in 1844. I saw that as the ministration of Jesus in the Holy place ended, and he closed the door of that apartment, a great darkness settled upon those who had heard, and had rejected the messages of Christ’s coming, and they lost sight of him. Jesus then clothed himself with precious garments. Around the bottom of his robe was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. He had suspended from his shoulders a breastplate of curious work. And as he moved, it glittered like diamonds, magnifying letters which looked like names written, or engraven upon the breastplate. After he was fully attired, with something upon his head which looked like a crown, angels surrounded him, and in a flaming chariot he passed within the second vail [sic]. I was then bid to take notice of the two apartments of the heavenly Sanctuary. The curtain, or door, was opened, and I was permitted to enter.” Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 158.

⁶ That is, the “shut-door Adventists” who became Seventh-day Adventists.

For a time after the disappointment in 1844, I did hold, in common with the advent body, that the door of mercy was then *forever* closed to the world.⁷

Almost all Adventists, including Mr. Miller, did, for a short time after their disappointment in 1844, believe that the world had received its last warning....But the idea that the work of *the gospel was finished was soon renounced*.⁸

After the passing of the time of expectation, in 1844, Adventists still believed the Saviour's coming to be very near; they held that they had reached an important crisis, and that *the work of Christ as man's intercessor before God, had ceased*. Having given the warning of the Judgment near, they felt that their work for the world was done, and they lost their burden of soul for the salvation of sinners, while the bold and blasphemous scoffing of the ungodly seemed to them another evidence that the Spirit of God had been withdrawn from the rejecters of his mercy. All this confirmed them in the belief that probation had ended, or, as they then expressed it, "the door of mercy was shut."⁹

The door opens—the second swing

Some time between October 22, 1844, and the end of December 1844, many Adventists gave up the teaching of the shut door. In the context of supporting the visions of his wife, Ellen, James White records this statement.

When she received her first vision, Dec. 1844, she [EGW] and all the band in Portland, Maine, (where her parents then resided) *had given up the midnight-cry, and shut door, as being in the past*.¹⁰

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 63.

⁸ Editor's note, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 1884, Vol. 4, p. 499.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

¹⁰ James White, *A Word to the "Little Flock,"* May, 30, 1847, p. 22 as reproduced in Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 176.

This shows that Ellen White had given up the shut door sometime before December 1844. In 1848 Ellen White wrote the following letter to Joseph Bates.¹¹ In this letter she recounts her vision “about the Bridegroom’s coming” that she received in February 1845. She gives evidence that a large number of Adventists had given up the shut door.

The view about the Bridegroom’s coming I had about the middle of February, 1845, while in Exeter, Maine, in meeting with Israel Dammon, James, and many others. *Many of them did not believe in a shut door.* I suffered much at the commencement of the meeting. Unbelief [in context, unbelief in a shut door] seemed to be on every hand.

There was one sister there that was called very spiritual. She traveled and [had] been a powerful preacher the most of the time for twenty years. She had been truly a mother in Israel. But a division had risen in the band on the shut door. *She had great sympathy, and could not believe the door was shut.* I had known nothing of their difference.¹²

These statements from James and Ellen White demonstrate that at least a fairly large group of Adventists had given up the shut door, and thus documents the second swing of the door. For a short period of time the door of mercy was open again.

The door shuts again—the third swing

The first two swings of the door give the historical background to this important “third swing” of the door. So far in our study we have seen many reinterpretations of

¹¹ Joseph Bates is a well known figure in SDA history who believed in, and supported, the visions of EGW for many years, but later, privately renounced them. See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, pp. 225–231.

¹² A. L. White, *Ellen G. White and The Shut Door Question*, Letter 3, 1847, pp. 49–51. Printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 418.

changing “truth”: from 1843 to 1844; from Christ coming to the earth in 1844, to Christ entering the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844. Now, we see Adventists flip-flopping on the “truth” of the shut door. This third swing of the door is one the Adventists have tried to explain away or deny,¹³ for it completely undermines the prophetic authority of Ellen White. As this swing of the door is often questioned in Adventism, I will give more documentation to this swing than I did to the first two.

The following evidence will show that the “shut-door” Adventists in general, and James and Ellen White in particular, held to a shut-door theology from December 1844 to about October 22, 1851.¹⁴ We will show that Ellen White *through her visions* taught that the door of mercy was shut. Here are the pertinent parts of her first vision received in December 1844.

Others [open door Adventists] rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. It was just as *impossible* for them to get on the path again and go to the City, as *all the wicked world which God had rejected*. They fell all the way along the path one after another, until we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus’ coming.¹⁵

¹³ See Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1971). See also, Robert W. Olson, *The “Shut Door” Documents* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1982).

¹⁴ We will see that this shut door was somewhat modified in 1849.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, “To the Remnant Scattered Abroad,” in *A Word to the “Little Flock,”* May 30, 1847, p. 14. Reproduced in Knight, *The Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 172.

From this first vision we understand two things. First, EGW was shown that it was impossible for the people who renounced the Millerite message, or its reinterpretation, to be saved. Second, God had rejected *all* the wicked world.

Ellen White's second vision in February 1845 teaches the same shut door. Continuing on with the letter to Joseph Bates, quoted earlier, EGW shows that it was her vision which caused this group in Portland, Maine to renounce their "error" of giving up the shut door. This makes it clear that EGW taught a shut door *through her vision*. This group, as we saw before, did not believe in a shut door.

At length my soul seemed to be in an agony, and while she was talking I fell from my chair to the floor. It was then I had a view of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne and going to the holiest and Bridegroom to receive His kingdom. They all said it was entirely new to them. The Lord worked in mighty power, setting the truth home to their hearts.

Sister Durben knew what the power of the Lord was, for she had felt it many times; and a short time after I fell she was struck down, and fell to the floor, crying to God to have mercy on her. When I came out of vision, my ears were saluted with Sister Durben's singing and shouting with a loud voice.

*Most of them received the vision, and were settled upon the shut door.*¹⁶

We see that Ellen White's first two visions taught that the door of mercy was closed for everyone outside the little band of Adventists. While they had given up the shut door teaching for a short time, her visions corrected this "error" and the door was shut—again.

There is yet more evidence that this is exactly what Ellen White believed. In another part of this same letter to Joseph Bates, she describes incidents in connection with her first

¹⁶ A. L. White, *Ellen G. White and The Shut Door Question*, Letter 3, 1847, pp. 49–51. Printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 417–419.

vision. Two things should be noted: first, there is evidence—not proof—that Ellen White may have obtained the material or ideas for her first “vision” from Joseph Turner. Second, Ellen White’s first vision agreed with Turner’s understanding of “truth.” It will be seen that Turner was an avowed believer in the radical shut door of mercy.

Perhaps you would like to have me give a statement in relation to both visions. *At the time I had the vision of the midnight cry I had given it [closed door] up in the past and thought it future, as also most of the band had.* I know not what time J. Turner got his paper. *I knew he had one out and one was in the house,* but I knew not what was in it, for I had not read a word in it....After I had the vision and God gave me light, he bade me deliver it to the band, but I shrank from it. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me. *I disobeyed the Lord,* and instead of remaining at home, where the meeting was to be that night, I got in a sleigh in the morning and rode three or four miles and there I found Joseph Turner. He merely inquired how I was and if I was in the way of my duty. *I said nothing, for I knew I was not.* I passed up (to the) chamber [either bedroom or sitting room in Mr. Turner’s home] and *did not see him again for two hours,* when he came up, asked if I was to be at meeting that night. I told him, No. He said he wanted to hear my vision and thought it duty for me to go home. I told him I should not. He said no more, but went away.

Very early next morning Joseph Turner called, said he was in haste going out of the city in a short time, and wanted I should tell him all that God had shown me in vision. It was with fear and trembling I told him all. After I had got through he said *he had told out the same last evening.*¹⁷

The above reference makes it patently evident that Joseph Turner, upon hearing the details of EGW’s first vision, which taught the shut door, said it was the *same*

¹⁷ Ibid.

thing he had said the evening before.¹⁸ This is evidence that EGW agreed with Turner. But what did Joseph Turner teach? In *The Advent Mirror*, of January 1845, is found a long article by A. Hale and Joseph Turner¹⁹ which “explains” the parable of the ten virgins, giving arguments in favor of the shut door of mercy. Here is just one excerpt.

But can any sinners be converted if the door is shut. Of course they cannot, though changes that may appear to be conversions may take place. The state of mankind before God, would be very much as it has been in cases where communities have been given up of God to destruction....But to think of laboring to convert the great masses of the world at such a time, would be as idle as it would have been of the Israelites, when they were down by the Red sea, to have turned about to convert the Egyptians.²⁰

¹⁸ From this letter we know that Joseph Turner had written a paper supporting the shut door. Ellen White knew he had a paper out, knew it was in the house and claimed not to know what was in it. She went to his house, against the will of the Lord, spent two hours by herself and then went back home. We now know from research within the last thirty years that Ellen White was a copious copier of other people's works, if not an outright plagiarist. We know that even some portions of her visions were copied from books published before her visions were received. See Walter Rea, *The White Lie*, (M & R Publications, Box 2056, Turlock, CA 95381, 1982) With these facts in mind, it is interesting to note the circumstances of this letter. Could it be that the information EGW related in her “vision” regarding the shut door actually came from Joseph Turner? We should note that Turner was the first to hear EGW's first vision and he said, “he had told out the same last evening.” (See Robert B. Tower, *The True Story of the Beginning of Seventh-day Adventism and of Mrs. Ellen G. White's Claims*, printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 416, 417.)

¹⁹ See Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, pp. 133–136, for this complete article.

²⁰ A. Hale and J. Turner, *The Advent Mirror*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan. 1845, as reproduced in *Ibid.*, p. 136.

We see that EGW and Joseph Turner taught the same shut-door theology. Additional evidence that Ellen White taught the shut door can be seen from the writings of her husband, James White.²¹ He wrote the following in 1850, approximately six years after EGW's first vision.

[The cry] "Behold the Bridegroom cometh" was actually raised, swelled louder and louder throughout the land, until that advent people were fully awake, anxiously expecting to see Jesus on the tenth day of the seventh [Jewish] month [October 22, 1844].

When we came up to that point of time, all our sympathy, burden and prayers for sinners ceased, and the unanimous feeling and testimony was, that *our work for the world was finished for ever*. "As he [Christ] is, so are we in this world" 1 John 2:17. The living branches on earth, will sympathize with, and move in concert with the "true vine" in heaven. The reason why the living branches felt that their work was done for the world, was, because the 2300 days were ended, and the time had come for Jesus to *shut the door of the Holy*; to receive the Kingdom, and cleanse the Sanctuary. This change, so wonderfully described in Dan. 7:13, 14, answers to the coming of the bridegroom and shut door in the parable [of the virgins in Matthew 25]....*He is still merciful to his saints, and ever will be; and Jesus is still their advocate and priest. But the sinner, to whom Jesus had stretched out His arms all the day long, and who had rejected the offers of salvation, was left without an advocate, when Jesus passed from the Holy Place, and shut that door in 1844. The professed church, who rejected the truth [in historical context, the "truth" is the 1844 message and its reinterpretation], was also rejected, and smitten with blindness, and now, "with their flocks and with their herds" they go "to seek the Lord" as still an advocate for sinners; but, says the prophet, [Hosea 5:6,7] "they shall not find him; he hath WITHDRAWN HIMSELF from them. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; for they have begotten strange children."*

²¹ There are a few occasions when EGW did not agree with the beliefs of her husband, James. However, in the majority of cases they did agree on what they taught.

The reason why they do not find the Lord is simply this, they seek Him where He is not; “he hath withdrawn himself: to the Most Holy Place.” The prophet of God calls their man-made converts, “STRANGE CHILDREN;” “now shall a mouth devour them, and their portions.”

Says the objector—“I believe that Jesus is still on the mercy-seat.” In answer to this oft-repeated assertion, let me say: Jesus never was on the mercy seat, and never will be. The mercy seat is the Most Holy Place, where Jesus entered *at the end* of the 2300 days. Its position is on the ark of the ten commandments; and over it are the cherubims of glory. Before the mercy seat stands our Great High Priest pleading His blood for Israel.²²

That Ellen White agreed with her husband’s theology on the shut door is evident, not only from her first two visions, but from other statements as well. In 1849, five years after her first vision, she said:

The reformations²³ that were shown me, were not reformations from error to truth; but from bad to worse; for those who professed a change of heart, had only warp (sic) about them a religious garb, which covered up the iniquity of a wicked heart. Some appeared to have been really converted, *so as to deceive God’s people*; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever.²⁴

This is [a] very important hour with us. Satan has come down with great power, and we must *strive hard*, and press our way to the kingdom. We have a mighty foe to contend with; but an Almighty Friend to protect and strengthen us in the conflict. If we are firmly fixed upon the *present truth*, and have our hope, like an *anchor of the soul, cast within the second veil*, the various winds of *false doctrine and error* cannot move us. The

²² James White, *The Present Truth*, May 1850, printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 351, 352.

²³ These “reformations” were either conversions or changed lives that were presented to the shut-door Adventists by other Christians as evidence that the door of mercy was still open.

²⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Present Truth*, Aug. 1849, p. 22. Printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 356.

excitements and *false reformations* of this day do not move us, for *we know* that the Master of the house rose up in 1844, and *shut the door of the first apartment of the heavenly tabernacle*; and now we certainly expect that *they* [in historical context, these are the pastors who rejected the 2300-day cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary message] will “go with their flocks,” “to seek the Lord; but *they shall not find him*; he hath withdrawn himself (within the second veil) from them.” *The Lord has shown me that the power which is with them is a mere human influence, and not the power of God.*²⁵

There is still more evidence that Ellen White taught a shut door of mercy. The following letter from O. R. L. Crosier, the architect of SDA sanctuary theology, was written to D. M. Canright under the date of December 1, 1887.

I kept the seventh day nearly a year, about 1848. In 1846 I explained the idea of the sanctuary in an article in an extra double number of the *Day Star*, Cincinnati, O. The object of that article was to support the theory that the door of mercy was shut, a theory which I, and nearly all Adventists who had adopted William Miller’s views, held from 1844 to 1848. Yes, I *know* [his emphasis] that Ellen G. Harmon—now Mrs. White—held the shut-door theory at that time.”²⁶

In connection with the shut-door theology of Adventists, Desmond Ford notes:

The Camden vision should also be considered. Once thought of as spurious,²⁷ Uriah Smith’s allusions to it in his *Visions of Mrs. E.G. White* indicate its authenticity²⁸...(This has been found

²⁵ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1850-03-01.

²⁶ Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, pp. 106, 107.

²⁷ There is some evidence that this “spurious charge” may have resulted from the attempt to suppress this vision. See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, pp. 145–169.

²⁸ “The genuineness of this vision is acknowledged by Editor Uriah Smith and Elder J. N. Loughborough in their efforts to explain it away.” *Ibid.*, p. 127.

with some other early Ellen G. White documents.) Here it is and the sentiments fit exactly the years immediately following 1844.²⁹

Now we quote from the vision Ellen White received in Camden, N.Y., June 29, 1851, known as the Camden Vision.³⁰

The Lord shewed (sic) that he had, in answer to prayer, *removed his frown from this band*, and that they could have the smiles of Jesus, if they would live very humble, and walk carefully before the Lord, and *know that in every step that they took that God was guiding them*, and the band would be strong and would be a terror to their enemies; and the band must press together. Then I saw Bro. Wing and Bro. Hyatt³¹—that the enemy had been trying to destroy them—that they were praying for light upon a few texts of Scripture, and *the more they prayed the darker they grew*, and the enemy was shutting down a network of darkness over them; and just about as they were getting entirely shut in, they were delivered—the net was broken, and they escaped. *I saw the true light on these texts, &c.* I saw that this rebuke was given by Jesus to the Pharisees and Jews, who were filled with self-righteousness, and would only speak to or greet those who were just as full of self-righteousness and hypocrisy as they themselves were; and they entirely neglect and pass by those who did not make quite as much, and who did not receive greeting in the market as they did. *I saw that it did not in any way apply to this time—that we are now living in. Then I saw that Jesus prayed for his enemies, but that should not cause US to pray for the wicked world, whom God had rejected*—when he prayed for his enemies, there was hope for them, and they could be benefited and saved by his prayers, and also after he was a mediator in the outer apartment for the whole world; *but now his spirit and sympathy were withdrawn from the world; and our sympathy must be with Jesus, and must be*

²⁹ Printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 356.

³⁰ See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 127.

³¹ Ellen White mentions “Brother Hyatt” on several other occasions in her writings. See Manuscript Release, Vol. 1, p. 313; Vol. 2, p. 293; Vol. 4, p. 395.

withdrawn from the ungodly. I saw that God loved his people—and, in answer to prayers, would send rain upon the just and the unjust—I saw that now, in this time, that he watered the earth and caused the sun to shine for the saints and the wicked by our prayers, by our Father sending rain upon the unjust, while he sent it upon the just. I saw that the wicked could not be benefited by our prayers now—and although he sent it upon the unjust, yet their day was coming. Then I saw concerning loving our neighbors. I saw that scripture did not mean the wicked whom God had rejected that we must love, but he meant our neighbors in the household, and did not extend beyond the household; yet I saw that we should not do the wicked around us any injustice:—but, our neighbors whom we were to love, were those who loved God and were serving him.

As I have read and re-read the above vision, I am at an utter loss to comprehend the mind that could have written it. What does this teach about God? I get the picture of a God who is angry with his people and they must pray to remove his frown.³² What does this teach about prayer? The more they prayed the darker they grew. EGW speaks of seeing the “true light” on texts of Scripture, then twists them to mean exactly the opposite of their biblical, contextual meaning. Were not the Jews doing exactly what EGW recommends the shut-door Adventists to do: love only their own people? Is this not the same exclusive spirit that Jesus was trying to correct? Is not EGW’s message of “truth” directly opposed to the truth of Jesus as we know it from the Gospels? What kind of spirit is working here twisting truth, trying to control minds, undermining the gospel of love, grace, and mercy?

Ellen White continued to reinforce shut-door theology by making *false* analogies.

³² A term used over 250 times in the writings of Ellen White.

*The Jews were left in complete deception and total darkness. They lost all the light they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings. They could not be benefited by the mediation of Christ in the Holy place. The heavenly Sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly, yet they had no knowledge of the way to the heavenly.*³³

I saw that the *nominal churches* [those who had rejected the 1844 sanctuary message], as the Jews crucified Jesus, had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the move made in heaven, or of the way into the Most Holy, and *they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there.* Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, *they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left,* and Satan, pleased with the deception of the professed followers of Christ, fastens them in his snare, and assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, and works with his power, his signs and lying wonders. Some he deceives in one way and some in another. He has different delusions prepared to affect different minds. Some look with horror upon one deception, while they readily receive another. Satan deceives some with Spiritualism. He also comes as an angel of light, and spreads his influence over the land. I saw false reformations every where. The churches were elated, and considered that God was marvelously working for them, *when it was another spirit.* It will die away and leave the world and the church in a worse condition than before.³⁴

In summary of his research on the shut-door teachings of EGW, after mentioning her first vision, Robert B. Tower states:

As a result of this [her first vision] and later visions, belief in the shut door again took root and continued in this group—who later

³³ Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 170.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

took on the name of Seventh-day Adventists—for *from seven to ten years*.³⁵

There is yet more fascinating background to the teachings of these Adventists between 1844 and 1851 that sheds light on many of the statements EGW made during this time. Joseph Bates, who was a close friend and coworker of James and Ellen White, in 1850 published a tract on the sanctuary. On page 9 he says:

The twenty three hundred years are complete, ending in the fall of 1844....Here his [Christ's] work ceased ministering and mediating for the whole world forever....Here the door is shut.³⁶

Then Bates goes on to state his position that the Day of Atonement will be seven years long.

The seven spots of blood on the Golden Altar and before the mercy seat, I fully believe, represent the duration of the judicial proceeding on the living saints in the Most Holy, all of which time they will be in their affliction even seven years....Then the number seven will finish the day of atonement....This is the duration of the third angel's message.³⁷

There is evidence that James and Ellen White accepted this teaching of Bates. This explains why EGW made statements about the shortness of remaining time. These seven years started October 22, 1844, and were to end on October 22, 1851.

As this date approached, Ellen White relates what was said to her in vision by her angel.

³⁵ Robert B. Tower, *The True Story of the Beginnings of Seventh-day Adventism and of Mrs. Ellen G. White's Claims*. Printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 417.

³⁶ See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 112.

³⁷ Joseph Bates, "The Typical and Anti-typical Sanctuary," pp. 10–13, 15. As printed in *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 114.

In a view given June 27, 1850, my accompanying angel said, "*Time is almost finished*. Do you reflect the lovely image of Jesus as you should?" Then I was pointed to the earth and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel's message. Said the angel, "*Get ready, get ready, get ready*. Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died." I saw that there was a great work to do for them and but *little time* in which to do it.³⁸

Some of us have had time to get the truth and to advance step by step, and every step we have taken has given us strength to take the next. But now time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a *few months*.³⁹

In September 1850 Ellen White had a vision in which she stated:

I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was *nearly finished* and that time can last but a *very little longer*.⁴⁰

In a letter to "Brother and Sister Loveland, dated November 1, 1850, EGW wrote:

My vision comes up before me and the words of the angel even now seem to ring in my ears, "Get ready, get ready, get ready. Time is almost finished, almost finished, almost finished. Cry, cry, for the arm of the Lord to be revealed, for the arm of the Lord to be revealed. Time is almost finished. What you do, ye must do quickly!"⁴¹

In a letter to Mrs. P. D. Lawrence, dated July 29, 30, 1850, Miss Sarah B. Harmon, the sister of EGW, wrote:

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 64.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57. See also Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 114.

⁴¹ Ellen G. White, Letter 26, 1850, p. 2, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 8, pp. 222, 223.

I believe this is the last winter we shall see before Jesus, our great High priest, comes out. Oh, Let us live for God and sacrifice for him faithfully.⁴²

The above statements fit in perfectly with the Adventist teaching of the shut door and Bates' teaching that the Day of Atonement was to be seven years long. They also demonstrate a lack of assurance which comes from a misunderstanding of the gospel. They are to "get ready, get ready, get ready." Some will have to do in a few months what it took the rest of the Advent band years to do.⁴³ These statements demonstrate a trust in works and character development in order to have the assurance of salvation. When the gospel is understood correctly, it does not take long to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

D.M. Canright, in his book under the chapter "The Shut Door," gives much additional evidence to support the Adventist teaching of the closed door between the years 1844 and 1851.⁴⁴ Then he asks some very pointed questions.

Did Christ and the Holy Spirit lead these founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to lose for years all their burden and sympathy for sinners and cease to pray for them? Was Christ in sympathy with them when they taught that he no longer was a friend of sinners? Was he in sympathy with them when they taught that he was no longer an advocate for them, and that the whole world was rejected of God, left without the Holy Spirit, turned over to Satan, and that all churches save their own were only the synagogues of Satan, forts of the devil, in fact? Did a holy angel tell Mrs. White all that terribly false message? Such a

⁴² See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 117.

⁴³ "Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died." Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 64. Note the emphasis is on personal character development, not on trust in Christ.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 103–144.

theory seems like blasphemy. If God did not lead them then, has he led them since? Is he leading them now?⁴⁵

Chapter Summary

1. EGW and the other Adventists believed the door of mercy was shut on October 22, 1844 (door shut, first swing).
2. EGW and many other Adventists gave up the shut door some time between October 22, 1844 and December, 1844 (open door, second swing).
3. EGW, through her visions and writing, corrected the “error” of those who believed the door of mercy was still open, by teaching it was still shut (shut door, third swing). The evidence for this is:
 - a. In her first vision she said it was “impossible” for those who gave up the 1844 “truth” to be saved. She also stated that all the rest of the world was “rejected.”
 - b. In her second vision, EGW corrected the “error” of those who had given up the shut door.
 - c. Ellen White agreed with Joseph Turner who taught that the door of mercy was shut.
 - d. James White taught the door of mercy was shut.
 - e. EGW and other Adventists believed that the churches who were experiencing reformation and conversions were inspired by another spirit, that Satan had control of them, and they were caught in his deceptions. Their converts were called “strange children.”
 - f. Ellen White, in the Camden vision, taught that Adventists were not to love or pray for those

⁴⁵ Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, pp. 131, 132.

outside the household of faith, by which she meant they were to pray for no one outside their little Advent band.

- g. Ellen White said that the prayers of those who rejected the sanctuary message were useless.
 - h. Researchers, such as Dr. Ford and Robert B. Tower, believe that Adventists held to the shut-door teaching for at least seven years (1844–1851).
 - i. D. M. Canright, a contemporary of EGW, believed that the Adventists taught a shut door between 1844 and 1851, and he has considerable documentation to support his conclusions.
- 4. EGW and other Adventists misused Scripture including, but not limited to, Matt. 25:40 and Hosea 5:6, 7.
 - 5. EGW built some of her shut-door theology on the use of false analogies.
 - 6. There is some evidence to believe that EGW accepted the seven-year-Day-of-Atonement theory of Joseph Bates and expected Christ to come October 22, 1851.

Chapter 8



The Door Opens Again—Quietly

In the last chapter we saw that after the disappointment of October 22, 1844, early Adventists taught that the door of mercy was shut. Shortly after this, Ellen White and other Adventists gave up that teaching. Then, influenced by several visions of Ellen White, they saw their “error” of giving up the shut door, repented, and again taught that the door of mercy was shut. Dr. Ford, who has done considerable study in this area of Adventist history, makes this observation.

Until the summer of 1851–1852 this [the shut door] was the consistent stance of Sabbathkeeping Adventists, as they repeatedly denied the possibility of conversion for the rejected sinners of earth. Until the summer of 1851 our pioneers considered their task as confined to “the little flock” while unbelievers were

considered as left in outer darkness since the closing of the 1844 door.¹

A partly open door

The door opens for Adventist children

At first, Adventists were adamant that no genuine conversions took place after 1844.^{2,3,4} As the years went by it became harder and harder for them to maintain this teaching. The first unexpected problem they had to face was that some of their own children who had been infants in 1844 were now reaching the age of accountability.⁵ How could they get their own children through the shut door?

In Volume 4 of *The Spirit of Prophecy*, we find these words in the chapter entitled “An Open and Shut Door.” This was taken from a vision EGW had in 1849.

After the passing of the time of expectation, in 1844, Adventists still believed the Saviour’s coming to be very near; they

¹ Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 355.

² “I saw that the mysterious signs and wonders, and false reformations would increase, and spread. The reformations that were shown me, were not reformations from error to truth; but from bad to worse; for those who professed a change of heart, had only wrapt (sic) about them a religious garb, which covered up the iniquity of a wicked heart. Some *appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God’s people*; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever.” Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1849-08-01.

³ “Many will point us to one who is said to be converted, for positive proof that the door is not shut, thus yielding the word of God for the feelings of an individual.” James White, *Present Truth*, 1849-12-47.

⁴ Miller himself held the shut door until at least Feb. 1845, when he wrote, “I have not seen a genuine conversion since [1844].” *Voice of Truth*, Feb. 19, 1845, as printed in Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 107.

⁵ See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 123 for a more detailed account of this incident.

held that they had reached an important crisis, and that the work of Christ as man's intercessor before God, had ceased. Having given the warning of the Judgment near, they felt that their work for the world was done, and they lost their burden of soul for the salvation of sinners, while the bold and blasphemous scoffing of the ungodly seemed to them another evidence that the Spirit of God had been withdrawn from the rejecters of his mercy. *All this confirmed them in the belief that probation had ended, or, as they then expressed it, "the door of mercy was shut."*⁶

But clearer light came with the investigation of the sanctuary question... "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth; I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee *an open door*, and no man can shut it." (Rev. 3:7, 8)... So when Christ passed from the holy to the most holy of the heavenly sanctuary, the door, or ministration, of the former apartment was closed, and *the door, or ministration, of the latter was opened*. Christ had *ended one part of his work as our intercessor, to enter upon another portion of the work; and he still presented his blood before the Father in behalf of sinners*. "Behold, he declares, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

*Those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement, receive the benefits of his mediation in their behalf; but those who reject the light that brings to view this work of ministration, are not benefited thereby.*⁷

David Arnold, in *defending* the shut door, answers some of the objections people were raising.

But, says the objector, does not this leave the present generation, [which included the Adventist children] who have passed the line of accountability, since that time [1844] without an intercessor or mediator, and leave them destitute of the means of salvation? In reply to this objection, I would remark, that as they were then in a state of INNOCENCY, they were entitled to a record on the breastplate of judgment as much as those who

⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 268.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

had sinned and received pardon; and are therefore subjects of this present intercession of our great high priest.”⁸

This explanation seemed to solve the problem for the children. Soon, however, they had to open the door just a bit wider.

The door opens for those who press their way in

In 1850 a Mr. Churchill married a daughter of Sister Benson who was a “’44 Adventist.” They were quite surprised that someone who had been an *unbeliever* in 1844 would now want to become an Adventist. This conversion was noised abroad quite extensively.⁹

Ellen White recounts how those who rejected the message of Noah were lost, how God’s mercy ceased to plead with the guilty inhabitants of Sodom,¹⁰ how Jesus said to the Jews, “Your house is left unto you desolate,” and then she says:

Looking down to the last days, the same infinite power declares, concerning those who “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,” “for this cause God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (Mt. 23:38; 2 Thess. 2:10–12) *As they rejected the teaching of his word* [in context “the teaching of His word” is the high priestly ministration of Christ in the Most Holy Place which supposedly started in 1844], *God withdraws this Spirit, and leaves them to the deceptions which they love.*

⁸ David Arnold, “The Shut Door Explained,” *The Present Truth*, Dec. 1849, pp. 45, 46. Printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 354.

⁹ See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, pp. 133, 134 for a more detailed account of this incident.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 270.

But Christ still intercedes in man's behalf, and light will be given *to those who seek it*. Though this was not at first understood by Adventists, it was afterward made plain.¹¹

Adventists were for a short time united in the belief that the door of mercy was shut. *This position was soon abandoned.*¹²

Summary of EGW's modified closed door statements

1. EGW corroborates that the early Adventists were united in their belief that the door of mercy was shut.
2. She now redefines the "door." The first shut door dealt with the door of mercy in the parable of the ten virgins, which was closed *simultaneously* with the door of the *first* apartment in the heavenly sanctuary. Now, she does not speak of the shut door of the parable of the ten virgins, nor does she always equate the door of the first apartment with the close of probation. Now, she equates the *time* of the shut door of the first apartment, to the open door of Revelation 3:7, 8. In this way, she still speaks of a shut door, but now it *may* have a different meaning.
3. After 1844 when the door of mercy was slammed shut by EGW's first two visions, she said that for *anyone* who even professed a change of heart, that change was only a change from "bad to worse." And these converts were a work of Satan to deceive God's true people.¹³ Now the shut door of mercy is partly open. It is open *"to those who seek it."*

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 271.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ellen G. White, *The Present Truth*, Aug. 1849, p. 22. Printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 356.

4. The door of mercy was, however, still shut for those who did not accept the 1844 sanctuary message. *“Those who reject the light that brings to view this work of ministration, are not benefited thereby.”*¹⁴
5. Ellen White states that Adventists at first did not understand this partly open door, but she does *not* remind them that the reason they did not understand it was because *she and her husband taught that the door was closed*, and that she had *“visions from God”* to support the tightly closed door.
6. Ellen White states that the Adventist belief that the door of mercy was shut *“was soon abandoned.”* However, she does *not* remind them *that those who soon abandoned this teaching were confronted with their “error” by her, and were lead to “repent of their error” in response to her prophetic “visions.”* She does not state that she and her husband, as well as a number of other Adventists, taught the shut door until 1851.

Of interest at this point is the footnote that appears in the appendix of *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, dealing with the shut door. We quote from page 499, Note 6:

Almost all Adventists, including Mr. Miller, did, for a short time after their disappointment in 1844, believe that the world had received its last warning. They could hardly think otherwise, with their faith in the message which they had given—“the hour of his Judgment is come.” Rev. 14:6, 7. They naturally thought that this proclamation must close the dispensation. *They were as unable to find their bearing at once* as were the disciples when their Lord, whom they had hailed as their king coming to his throne, was crucified and buried. In both cases they were unable to comprehend their terrible disappointment.

But the idea that the work of the gospel was finished was soon renounced, except by some fanatical ones who would

¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 269.

neither be counseled nor receive instruction. But most of those who renounced it, and yet retained their faith in the work, continued to believe that they who clearly saw the light of the Heaven-sent warning and persistently rejected it, *were rejected of the Lord.* There is no more fanaticism in that than there is in the common belief that those obdurate Jews who continued to reject the light of the advanced truth sent to that generation, were rejected of God.

This footnote is of interest on several accounts:

- It again corroborates the fact that the Adventists at first were united on the shut door.
- It corroborates the partly open door. The door of mercy was then closed only to those who clearly understood the sanctuary message and rejected it.
- It defends this partly open door with biblical parallels which *do not apply*. The disciples *did not* have visions from the Lord to support their misunderstanding.
- It states the shut-door teachings were soon renounced. However, many Adventists, including James and Ellen White, held the door shut until about 1851.¹⁵
- Perhaps the most interesting thing in this note, is that it states that the only people who did not immediately renounce the shut door were the “fanatical ones who would neither be counseled nor receive instruction.” It does not, however, remind the readers that Ellen White, herself, with the authority of her prophetic visions, was the one, strong voice, who proclaimed with the “authority of God,” that those who immediately renounced the shut door, were in error and the door was still shut. If we are to believe this statement, it appears that we have only two choices: either the visions of Ellen White which taught the closed door were wrong or Ellen

¹⁵ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 350–362.

White, herself, was one of those “fanatical ones who would neither be counseled nor receive instruction.”

The problem of credibility

It is clear that EGW held a shut door *for those who had not accepted the reinterpretation of the 1844 sanctuary message*, until at least June 29, 1851, when she had the Camden Vision. There is some evidence to believe that James and Ellen White accepted Joseph Bates’ theory of the seven-year Day of Atonement which anticipated October 22, 1851,¹⁶ as the close of Christ’s ministration in the Most Holy Place. From the evidence I have been able to find, it appears that the shut door (of salvation) was given up in small increments. In 1849 it opened up wide enough for the children of the Adventists, and then in 1850 it opened up a little more for Mr. Churchill who forced his way through. Sometime after the autumn of 1851 the shut door doctrine was given up by Adventists.¹⁷ Canright says:

Evidently this Churchill conversion, and the case of their own children growing up, began to open their eyes to the folly of their “shut door” views, and caused them to hasten their modification and finally give them up entirely.¹⁸

Now, Adventists in general, and EGW in particular, had another problem. The visions of EGW to this point had contained so many “I was shown,” etc., conflicting statements where God was supposedly on record supporting

¹⁶ See Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, pp. 64, 67, where EGW was “shown” that there were only a few months of time left.

¹⁷ To receive salvation, however, one still had to accept the Adventist teachings of the sanctuary and Sabbath. Based upon a recent visit (January 1996) to an SDA church, some Historic Adventists still teach the same requirement.

¹⁸ Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 135.

their various conclusions of “truth,” that changing them again would create a major problem of credibility. One could not expect people to flip-flop on “truth,” which was supported by prophetic authority, too many times without it becoming evident something was fundamentally wrong. In other words, they were faced with the problem of how to change the erroneous statements which were made by Ellen White based upon her “God-given visions.” These visions had been printed in a number of early periodicals and pamphlets. Now they needed to change these “heaven-sent” doctrines *again*. How would they do this?

The earliest date-setting mistakes were said to be caused by a mistake in Miller’s chart aided by the fact, according to EGW, that God had “held His hand over the mistake” and when “He removed His hand” they instantly saw their error and corrected it.¹⁹ Then they found that their October 1844 prediction of the second coming had to be reinterpreted. This reinterpretation included their teaching on the shut door of mercy. Now they were faced with having to reinterpret the reinterpretation. The heaven-endorsed message of the shut door of mercy they had now opened *again*—the fourth swing of the door. How could they do this and maintain credibility?

Add a new door

The first thing Adventists did in opening the door of mercy was to include the open door of Revelation 3:7, 8 in their “door theology.” But this did not solve all their problems. What would they do with all the early written documents which clearly taught the closed door of mercy?

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 137, 138.

Change and omit statements

Dr. Ford, who has done considerable study in this area, makes this comment.

When in 1851 and 1852 James White reprinted some of his earlier articles, *he omitted or changed a number of his former statements about the shut door.*²⁰

This took care of what James White had written, but he did not have visions, nor did he claim to write with heavenly authority. What would they do about the early visions of EGW?

Suppress the vision

There is evidence that some of the early visions of EGW that taught the shut door were suppressed. The preface to the first edition of *Early Writings* claims to include all the early visions of EGW.²¹

A vision which Mrs. White had at Camden, N. Y., June 29, 1851, is entirely missing from this volume [*Early Writings*] which professes to include *all* of Mrs. White's early writings.²²

Uriah Smith, an early Adventist leader who worked at the *Review* office, saw a copy of *A Word to the "Little Flock"* in 1851,²³ about the time Adventists gave up the shut-door teachings. This copy apparently disappeared, and for the next twenty-eight years he never saw another copy of this important, early Adventist document. This is very unusual, as the visions of EGW were cherished, important documents.²⁴

²⁰ Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 355.

²¹ See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 148.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 157–159.

Change the vision

A third way the Adventists dealt with the doctrinal error in the early visions of Ellen White was to change her visions. In her book *Early Writings* there is this note in the preface.

To the first edition of “Experience and Views” has been added two very interesting dreams, which were mentioned, but not related, in the original work. Footnotes have also been added, giving dates and explanations.

Aside from this, *no changes from the original have been made,*²⁵ except the occasional employment of a new word, or a change in the construction of a sentence, better to express the idea. *No change has been made in any idea or sentiment of the original work, and the verbal changes have been made under the author’s own eye, and with her approval.*²⁶

We quote now from two versions of EGW’s first vision. The one on the left is the original taken from “To the Remnant Scattered Abroad.”²⁷ The one on the right is the revised vision as published in the 1882 edition of *Early Writings*, which has the above note in the preface. The highlighted portion is that which was omitted in the revised version.

²⁵ There seems to be some question as to what the “original” here refers. If it is “Experience and Views”, then the statement is correct. However, if “original” refers to White’s original *vision*, then this is deceptive because the original vision had a statement about the shut door that was left out.

²⁶ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 3.

²⁷ This first vision is also printed in *The Day-Star*, p. 31, in a “Letter from Sister Harmon,” Dec. 20, 1845. See Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 146.

Original Vision:

Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. *It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City, as all the wicked world which God had rejected. They fell all the way along the path one after another, until we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming.*

Changed Vision:

Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below. Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming.

In consideration of the above evidence, we can justly make the following conclusions:

1. The change in the vision was a *purposeful* change.
2. The change in the vision was a *doctrinal* change.
3. The change in the vision was a *major* change.
4. The change in the vision was *denied*.²⁸
5. The change in the vision was said to be done “*under the author’s own eye, and with her approval.*”

Change the place and the time of the shut door

There is yet another way the early Adventists dealt with the doctrinal errors in the early visions of EGW. They quietly redefined their terms. They not only added the open door of Revelation 3:7, 8, they redefined the meaning of the shut door.

It is evident by the term “shut door” the early Adventists meant “the door of mercy” or “the close of probation.” And they used the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 to show that Christ rose up and shut the door in 1844. This happened, according to them, simultaneously with the shut door of the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary.

However, in later revisions of her works, EGW *changed the place and the time of the shut door*. Note in the quotation below how the “shut door” of the parable is now applied differently.

When the work of investigation shall be *ended*, when the cases of those who in all ages have professed to be followers of Christ have been examined and decided, then, and *not till then*, probation will close, and *the door of mercy will be shut*. Thus in the one short sentence, “They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut,” we are carried down

²⁸ See footnote No. 25.

through the Saviour's *final ministration*, to the time when the great work for man's salvation shall be *completed*.²⁹

Now the shut door in the parable of the ten virgins is no longer associated with the door of the *first* apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, but is applied to the *end* of Christ's ministration in the *second* apartment of the sanctuary. This changes the *time* of the shut door from 1844 to sometime in the future. This stands in *direct contradiction* to her early visions. One wonders which interpretation is "the inspired commentary" and which is to "*continue* as an authoritative source of truth" for Seventh-day Adventists.

Canright makes the following peppery summary:

Do Baptists, Methodists, Disciples, or any other evangelical church, have to practice such methods to cover up past mistakes? Not one of them. All are proud of their past. But Seventh-day Adventists are ashamed of theirs, and well they may be.

In attempting to defend Mrs. White's visions as divine revelations, and in permitting her and her writings to occupy so prominent a place in their work, they have simply invited difficulties from which it is impossible for them to extricate themselves without exposing her mistakes and the falsity of her claims. In order to cover up her mistakes, they stultify themselves and harden their own consciences. They become practical Jesuits.³⁰

Chapter Summary

1. It is apparent that the early visions of EGW presented gross, doctrinal error.
2. The early visions of EGW presented this doctrinal error in authoritative wording as if it were a revelation coming from God.

²⁹ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 428.

³⁰ Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, pp. 167, 168.

3. It is clear that some Adventists after 1851 knew of the errors in the visions of EGW.
4. It is clear that EGW also knew of these errors.
5. To my knowledge, neither Ellen White nor the SDA church at the official level, has ever admitted that any “revelation” EGW received in vision was erroneous and doctrinally wrong.³¹
6. Ellen White did admit the errors of “early Adventists” and included herself in this group, but she never mentions her own role in *promoting* these errors by her “visions.”
7. During the years between 1849 and 1851, and perhaps even after this time, EGW and her associates used at least six main ways of trying to maintain credibility while changing their theology and her early erroneous visions:
 - a. They suppressed the early visions of EGW which taught the shut door.
 - b. They added the open door of Revelation 3:7, 8 to their “door theology.”
 - c. They made small, incremental changes over the years. The door of mercy opened for Adventist children, for Mr. Churchill, and for those who accepted the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844, but not for those who rejected it.
 - d. They actually omitted or changed the wording of early written documents, including the early visions of EGW.

³¹ Some SDA scholars and Evangelical Adventist pastors freely admit these early errors. Their response to them, however, is mixed. While some no longer hold the writings of EGW as authoritative, others do not see the early errors as undermining EGW’s prophetic ministry because of the dynamic of “progressive revelation.”

- e. They redefined the *meaning* and the *place* of the shut door.
 - f. They changed the *time* of the shut door from 1844 to the *close* of Christ's mediation in the *second* apartment of the heavenly sanctuary.
8. These facts bring into question the integrity of the early Adventist message and the authenticity of the prophetic ministry of EGW.³²

³² At least this was Canright's conclusion and the reason he left Adventism and wrote the book, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White, Seventh-day Adventist Prophet, Her False Claims Refuted*.

Chapter 9



The Sliver

The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary and the Investigative Judgment

We have looked briefly at the historical development of the “sliver,” the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.¹ This doctrine² is unique

¹ While the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary was taught shortly after the disappointment of 1844, the investigative judgment doctrine was not taught until about 1857. [See Paul A. Gordon, *The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers*, (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1983) p. 87, 88.] However, Adventists teach that the investigative judgment started in 1844. After 1857 these two unique SDA doctrines are inseparably connected in the writings of EGW.

to the SDA church and is the very center of SDA theology, more so than most Seventh-day Adventists realize or will admit. This fact will become evident in later chapters. While this is the “central pillar of Adventism,”³ it remains the most difficult doctrine to explain, support, or understand. The explanation for this, if not already apparent, will become evident in later chapters. The purpose of this chapter is to help the reader understand—as much as possible—the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

The current⁴ *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, item number 23, describes this doctrine as follows:

Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of

² From now on in this book we will usually consider the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment as one doctrine. Both are taught in the *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, No. 23. Today most Adventists—especially Evangelical Adventists—call the investigative judgment the “pre-advent judgment,” and some may even give this term a different meaning.

³ “The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’ Daniel 8:14.” Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 409. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 258.

⁴ Revised in 1980 and is still current in 1996.

animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who, among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1–5; 4:14–16; 9:21–28; 10:19–22; 1:3; 2:16,17; Dan. 7:9–27; 8:13, 14; 9:24–27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12, 14; 22:12)⁵

No doctrine is more confusing than this one. We will, however, give you a second chance to attempt to comprehend it. October 22, 1994, marked the 150th anniversary of the 1844 disappointment of William Miller's prediction of the second coming of Christ and the Seventh-day Adventist "reinterpretation" of this "event." To celebrate this "event," the SDA Adult Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly⁶ for October through December 1994, was devoted to this and kindred doctrines, here called *The Three Angels' Messages—Last Call for Heaven*. On page 52 of the teacher's edition we read these questions under the general heading: "The Hour of His Judgment (Rev. 14:7)." "What does the first angel's message tell us about the time of the judg-

⁵ For a complete listing of the *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, see Appendix A.

⁶ From personal conversations with Evangelical SDA pastors, it is evident that Evangelical Adventists do *not* consider the Sabbath School Lessons to speak for all Adventists.

ment?⁷ What light do Daniel 8:9–14 and 9:22–27 shed upon this time?” Then follows this “clear, concise, logical” answer!

These verses in Daniel tell us when the “hour” of His judgment arrives. Daniel 8:14 calls the pre-Advent judgment of Daniel 7:9–14 the cleansing of the sanctuary. The cleansing of the sanctuary was to begin after 2300 days. The Hebrew phrase translated “days” means “evening-morning.” It refers to a twenty-four-hour period. (Compare Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Ex. 27:20, 21.) The reference in Daniel 8:14 is not to the morning and evening sacrifices of the sanctuary, but to 2300 twenty-four-hour days, which are used as a prophetic symbol of 2300 years. The prophet was told that the work of the little horn would continue till the end of time (Dan. 8:17, 19, 25, 26). Twenty-three hundred literal days would not reach to the end of time. The “days” are intended to be symbolic of years.

The vision of Daniel 9 was given in 538 B.C., 13 years after the vision of Daniel 8 (551 B.C.). Gabriel told Daniel that “seventy weeks” (Hebrew: “seventy sevens”) were to be “cut off” (Hebrew) from the 2300 days. These “seventy sevens” must refer to 490 years, because they were to reach to the time of the Messiah (Christ). The 490 years were to be cut off from the beginning of the 2300 days. You cannot have 490 years cut off from 2300 literal days. The 2300 days are a prophetic symbol of 2300 years.

The beginning date of the 490 years and the 2300 years is given in Daniel 9:25: “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.” Ezra 6:14 indicates that God’s command for the complete restoration of Jerusalem was put into effect by the decrees of three Persian monarchs: Cyrus’ decree (537 B.C.); Darius I’s decree (519 or 518 B.C.); Artaxerxes I’s decree (457 B.C.).

Counting 2300 years from 457 B.C. brings us to 1844. Since the decree of Artaxerxes was put into effect in the autumn of 457

⁷ The investigative judgment is here called the “pre-advent judgment,” a term that is more acceptable to contemporary Adventists. However, it is clear that the same judgment is in view.

B.C., the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, the pre-Advent judgment, began in the autumn of 1844.

457 B.C.-----2300 years-----A.D. 1844

Command to
restore Jerusalem

Pre-Advent
judgment begins

This reasoning is set forth as proof that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment started in 1844. We will evaluate the above reasoning in later chapters. But for now, simply remember the importance of 1844: the beginning of the SDA cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

The next question we must ask is, What is the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment and what does it encompass?

Here Adventists link the word “cleansed” in Daniel 8:14⁸ to the “cleansing” of the sanctuary on the day of atonement in Leviticus 16. The “evidence” for this is given as follows:

There are many interesting linguistic connections that exist between Daniel 8:14 and Leviticus 16. Following are two examples: (1) The Hebrew word for “sanctuary” in Daniel 8:14 is the same as the word used in Leviticus 16 to specify the sanctuary as the object of cleansing. The sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 8:14 refers to the heavenly sanctuary because the vision reaches to “the time of the end” (Dan. 8:17). The earthly sanctuary ceased to have significance at the cross. (See Hebrews 8.) (2) In Daniel 8:14, the Hebrew word translated as “cleansed” is *nitsdaq*. It comes from the word *tsadaq*, which means “to justify, to be or make righteous, pure or clean.” In Leviticus 16:30 the verb “to cleanse” translates *taher*. In the Old Testament *tsadaq* and *taher* are used synonymously. For example, Job 4:17, “Can a mortal be more righteous [*tsadaq*] than God? Or can a man be more pure [*taher*]?” Thus, the idea of “cleansing”

⁸ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. A-113, for Dr. Raymond Cottrell’s discussion of the word “cleansed.”

can be attributed to the word *nitsdaq*. This is why the Septuagint (the Greek OT) translates the Hebrew of Daniel 8:14: “and the sanctuary shall be cleansed.” As both the sanctuary and the people were cleansed (or justified, put right) on the Day of Atonement, so they will be in the antitypical Day of Atonement referred to in Daniel 8:14.⁹

It is important to note at this point that Adventists *must* make a connection between Daniel 8:14 and Leviticus 16. Without such a connection, even if it is not good exegesis, there is absolutely no basis whatsoever to the Seventh-day Adventist 1844 cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

We know now that Seventh-day Adventists believe the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment started in 1844. We know that SDAs believe the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment deals with the Day of Atonement. Now, we must ask the next question, What does that have to do with Christians?

And as during the typical Day of Atonement the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary removed the sins accumulated there, so the heavenly sanctuary is cleansed by the final removal of the record of sins in the heavenly books. But before the records are finally cleared, they will be examined to determine who through repentance and faith in Christ is entitled to enter His eternal kingdom. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, therefore, involves a work of investigation or judgment that fully reflects the nature of the Day of Atonement as the day of judgment.¹⁰

If I tried to explain and document all the minutiae of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, most readers would get bogged down and lose interest. Therefore, I have chosen to give a

⁹ Adult Sabbath School Lessons, *The Three Angels' Messages*, p. 50.

¹⁰ *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 320. Quoted in *Ibid*.

brief summary of this teaching with the supporting documentation in the footnotes rather than in the text.

Summary of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment

The Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment teaches that at the ascension Christ entered the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. From that time until 1844, he performed a ministry of intercession and forgiveness analogous to that of the earthly sanctuary's outer apartment.¹¹ In 1844 Christ entered into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary for the *first time*^{12,13} to begin a work

¹¹ "The ministration of the priest throughout the year in the first apartment of the sanctuary, 'within the veil' which formed the door and separated the holy place from the outer court, represents the work of ministration upon which Christ entered at His ascension. It was the work of the priest in the daily ministration to present before God the blood of the sin offering, also the incense which ascended with the prayers of Israel. So did Christ plead His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners, and present before Him also, with the precious fragrance of His own righteousness, the prayers of penitent believers. Such was the work of ministration in the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 420. See also *Early Writings*, p. 252; *Review and Herald*, 1850-03-01; 1905-11-09; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 158.

¹² It is clear from the earliest records that this was the teaching and belief of early Adventists. In the Hiram Edson *Manuscript Fragment*, Mr. Edson relates his experience in the field the day after the great disappointment which laid the foundation for the reinterpretation of Miller's 1844 prophecy which, in turn, laid the foundation for the SDA investigative judgment. "Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that he for the *first time* entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that he

of investigative judgment.¹⁴ This judgment deals *only* with those who have professed to believe in God.¹⁵ The wicked,

had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth.” See Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 126. Ellen White states, “Thus those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth *at* the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ *then* entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming.” *The Great Controversy*, p. 422. “As foreshadowed in the type, and foretold in the Scriptures, Christ, *at the time appointed, entered the most holy place of* the temple of God in heaven. He is represented by the prophet Daniel as coming *at this time* to the Ancient of days: ‘I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came’—not to the earth, but—‘to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.’” Ellen G. White, *Southern Watchman* 1905-01-24. (In recent years Seventh-day Adventists have recognized this blatant disagreement with Scripture and now state that Christ “was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension.” See the SDA belief statement listed in the main text at the beginning of this chapter. Note, however, that all this says is that Christ became our *High Priest* at that time. It does not say that He entered the Most Holy Place. I believe this statement is designed to be somewhat nebulous. By itself it does not *explicitly* contradict Hiram Edson and Ellen White, which SDAs would not want to do, yet it also allows room for individual interpretation for those who want to make this doctrine agree with Scripture and want Christ in the Most Holy Place at the ascension as taught in Hebrews.)

¹³ Some Adventists make yet *another* reinterpretation in trying to harmonize EGW’s statement that Christ entered into the Most Holy Place in 1844 with the teaching of Hebrews 6:19. They state that Christ entered the Most Holy Place at the ascension to dedicate the Most Holy Place and then withdrew to the Holy Place until 1844.

¹⁴ “In 1844 our great High Priest entered the most holy place of the heavenly Sanctuary, to begin the work of the Investigative Judgment.” Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1887-03-22. “Attended by a cloud of heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies, and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of his ministration in behalf of man,—to perform the work of investigative

according to SDA theology, will be investigated during the 1000 years¹⁶ and executed shortly after the close of the 1000 years of Revelation 20.¹⁷ The investigative judgment starts with the cases of the dead, reaching clear back to Adam and reviews the life records of every person who has professed faith in God. Every deed is closely examined. Each succeeding generation is investigated and judged.¹⁸ At some time, none know when, the cases of the dead are completed and God then moves to the cases of the living.¹⁹

Judgment, and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits." Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 308.

¹⁵ "In the typical service *only* those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the *only* cases considered are those of the *professed people of God*." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 480. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 420.

¹⁶ "The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 480. "After the judgment of the wicked dead had been finished, at the end of the one thousand years..." Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 292.

¹⁷ "At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels. As He descends in terrific majesty He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 662.

¹⁸ "As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living." Ibid., p. 483.

¹⁹ "Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has

SDAs believe they will not know when their name comes up in judgment.²⁰ Therefore, it is extremely important that they engage in no frivolous activity or sin. Every sin must be confessed. *Sins which have been forgotten and unconfessed will stand against them in the judgment.*²¹ Their characters must demonstrate perfect obedience to the Ten Commandment law,²² especially the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.²³ Some names in this list of professed be-

been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living.” Ibid., p. 490.

²⁰ “How perilous is the condition of those, who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure-lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments,—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence, ‘Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.’” Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 315.

²¹ “Day after day passing into eternity, bears its burden of records of the books of Heaven. Words once spoken, deeds once done, can never be recalled. Angels of God have registered both the good and the evil. The mightiest conqueror upon the earth cannot call back the record of even a single day. Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe. Though they may be forgotten by us, they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn. They go before us to the Judgment. The use of every talent will be scrutinized.” Ibid., p. 331.

²² “Christ lived a life of perfect obedience to God’s law, and in this He set an *example* for every human being. The life that He lived in this world *we are to live* through His power and under His instruction.” Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, p. 180. “God requires perfect submission and perfect obedience. Eternal life is worth everything to us. You may come in close connection with God if you will agonize to enter in at the strait gate.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 218.

²³ “Many and earnest were the efforts made to overthrow their faith. None could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the law in the ark in Heaven, and that an acceptance of the

lievers will be accepted, others will be rejected.²⁴ When every person confessing faith in God has come up in review, Jesus *then* pleads his blood before the Father on behalf of those who are found worthy, and blots out the record of their sins from the books of heaven.²⁵ Then, not knowing if, or when, the work of investigative judgment has been completed, the righteous, still in their human state, before the second coming of Christ, will have to live in the sight of a holy God *without an intercessor*.²⁶ This, then,

truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgment of the claims of God's law, and the obligation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment." Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 257. "The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

²⁴ "Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance." *Ibid.*, p. 483.

²⁵ "At the time appointed for the judgment—the close of the 2300 days, in 1844—*began* the work of investigation and *blotting out of sins*. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged 'out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'" *Ibid.*, p. 486. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266. "Each one of you needs to awake and face square about to get out of the cart rut of selfishness. Improve the short, probationary time given you by working with your might to redeem the failures of your past life. God has placed you in a world of suffering to prove you, to see if you will be *found worthy* of the gift of eternal life." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 530.

²⁶ "When he [Christ] leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor." Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*.

completes the atonement.²⁷ Jesus then takes the sins of God's people and transfers them to Satan, who is represented by the Day of Atonement scapegoat in Leviticus 16.²⁸ Satan then bears the ultimate responsibility for all the sins he has caused the righteous to commit. He will suffer for these sins in the lake of fire and then be blotted from existence.²⁹ The investigative judgment is conducted before all the intelligences of the universe. This, then, vindicates the character of God before all the unfallen beings.³⁰ Then

ecy, Vol. 4, p. 432. See also *Early Writings*, p. 280; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 198; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 614, 647.

²⁷ "Thus those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the *closing work of atonement* preparatory to His coming." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 422.

²⁸ "When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration. He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty." Ibid., p. 422. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266.

²⁹ "The scape-goat was sent away into a land not inhabited, never to come again into the congregation of Israel. So will Satan be forever banished from the presence of God and his people, and he will be blotted from existence in the final destruction of sin and sinners." Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 267.

³⁰ "With sobering timeliness we study the subject of God's investigative judgment on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary (sesquicentennial) of its commencement in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary on October 22, 1844. Through this judgment work God has committed Himself to explain completely to the universe of unfallen beings His work of redemption, and His perfectly fair and loving way of dealing with sin and sinners. The judgment settles all accusations, doubts, and concerns about the justice and goodness of God." Commentary, Adult Sabbath School Lessons, *Three Angel's Messages*, p. 47.

everyone will know the immutability of the law of God and the righteous character of God.³¹

This doctrine lies at the foundation of Historic Adventist theology³² and it remains the central problem, not only of SDA theology, but also of its history, ethics and religious experience. The following chapters will show how the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is intertwined with other SDA distinctive “truths” to such a degree that it permeates all of Adventism. To remove this “sliver” will be no easy task.

³¹ “The final judgment is a most solemn event, which must take place before the assembled universe. When God honors His commandment-keeping people, not one of the enemies of truth and righteousness will be absent. And when transgressors receive their condemnation, all the righteous will see the result of sin. God will be honored, and His government vindicated; and that in the presence of the inhabitants of the universe.” Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1901-06-18.

³² “The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’ Daniel 8:14.” Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 409. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 258. Note: this quotation by EGW was written in 1911 in the chapter “What is the Sanctuary?”

Examine
everything
carefully;
hold fast
to that
which is
good

Chapter 10



A Broken Chain

A Biblical Evaluation

In this chapter we will give a short, biblical evaluation of the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. Those who wish a more thorough treatment of this study may purchase Dr. Ford's 750 page book, *Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment*.¹ However, a few, clear Bible references are more than enough to show, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative

¹ This book is available from Desmond Ford Publications, 7955 Bullard Drive, Newcastle, CA 95658.

judgment is not supported by Scripture and is contrary to it at almost every point.

The “key text”: Daniel 8:14

Ellen White states that this is *the* key text and “central pillar” of Adventism.

The scripture which above all others had been both the *foundation and the central pillar* of the advent faith was the declaration: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” Daniel 8:14.²

It is beyond the scope of this book to do an in-depth study of Daniel 8, which others have already done.³ We must, nevertheless, look closely at the context of Daniel 8 and its meaning for those who hold the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. In Daniel 8 we find several powers: a ram, a male goat with “a conspicuous horn between his eyes,”⁴ and then this conspicuous horn was broken and four horns came up in its place.⁵

And out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. And it grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper (Dan. 8:9–12).

² E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 409.

³ Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 166ff.

⁴ Dan. 8:5.

⁵ Dan. 8:8.

These symbols are interpreted for us in Daniel 8:15–27. The ram represented “the kings of Media and Persia.”⁶ The male goat represented “Greece.”⁷ The large horn represented its first king, Alexander the Great.⁸ The four horns represented four kingdoms which would arise from Alexander’s nation, although not with his power. Up to this point all evangelicals, even Seventh-day Adventists, are agreed that these four horns represent the four divisions of Alexander’s empire.⁹ Now Scripture states:

And in the latter period of *their rule*, when the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue. And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and *he will destroy to an extraordinary degree* and prosper and perform his will; *he will destroy mighty men and the holy people*. And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify himself in his heart, and *he will destroy many while they are at ease*. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency (Dan. 8:23–25).

Nearly all Bible scholars believe the little horn to represent Antiochus Epiphanes IV.^{10,11} Daniel states that

⁶ Dan. 8:20.

⁷ Dan. 8:21.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus. See *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 98.

¹⁰ Keil-Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 9, pp. 295–319; *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 96–108; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, X, 11, 7; and almost every other commentary. See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. A 69–75.

¹¹ It is also true that Christ, in Mt. 24:15, and Paul, in 2 Thess. 2:1–12, see Antiochus as a type of the coming antichrist. Please note, however, that neither Christ nor Paul see Antiochus as a type of the heavenly sanctuary nor in any way prefiguring the work of Christ. See Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ*, pp. 351–357, where the author discusses the similari-

this power came from one of the divisions of Alexander's empire. It is clear that this was a wicked power, which did great havoc against the saints. Adventists make this little horn to be Rome.¹² However, evidence that this has reference to Antiochus is overwhelming!

Many liberal scholars, who do not believe in prophecy, say that the Book of Daniel must have been written after 165 B.C., because it describes the persecutions of Antiochus with such exact detail.¹³

That this "little-horn" power is a wicked power is undeniable. We now confront the "sliver," the teaching of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, head on. Note well the context leading up to this SDA proof text of Daniel 8:14, which was, and is, "both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith."

It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper (Dan. 8:11, 12).

Now a question is asked about this wicked power, whom most scholars believe to be Antiochus.

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?" (Dan. 8:13).

ties between Mt. 24:15 and the experience of the Jews suffering under the persecutions of Antiochus.

¹² Adams, *The Sanctuary*, p. 97.

¹³ *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 20f.

It is transparently clear that this question relates to the activities of the *wicked*, “little horn” power, Antiochus. Note that the question specifically speaks about the regular sacrifice. The *time* part of the question deals with “*while* [a durative period of time, not a specific point in time, such as a date] the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host [people of God] to be trampled.” Again, we note that the question pertains to a wicked power, with reference to the *literal Jewish sanctuary* which Antiochus desecrated by offering a pig on its altar and erecting an image to Zeus.¹⁴ The question speaks of the time *during which* the sanctuary would be trampled. Now, we turn to the biblical answer to *this* question.

And he said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored” (Dan. 8:14).

As we would expect, the answer addresses the question and the answer is clear. After 2,300 “evenings and mornings” then the holy place will be properly restored. The question refers to the “little horn” power and therefore the answer must be about the “little horn” power. Note what Adventists, building on Miller’s interpretation, have done with this text.

- They have made the starting point of this prophecy 457 B.C., long before Antiochus, (or Rome) started desecrating the sanctuary.¹⁵ Yet the prophecy speaks of a time *during which* the sanctuary was to be desecrated.
- They have said that the sanctuary involved is the heavenly sanctuary when Scripture clearly shows it to be the

¹⁴ See 1 Maccabees 1–4 and 2 Maccabees 4–10 for a detailed account of the desecration of the sanctuary, cessation of sanctuary services, restoration of the sanctuary, and the daily sacrifice.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 410.

literal, Jewish sanctuary desecrated by the wicked power, Antiochus.¹⁶

- They have said that the restoration, or “cleansing” of the sanctuary, was not the rededication of the sanctuary by Judas Maccabaeus as recorded in First and Second Maccabees, which the Jews still celebrate, but the antitypical Day of Atonement cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, which they say started October 22, 1844.¹⁷
- And here we come to gross error—many would call it outright heresy! It is clear in Daniel 8 that it is the *wicked*, “little-horn” power which desecrates the earthly sanctuary. Adventists say that Daniel 8:14 speaks of the heavenly sanctuary that was desecrated by the sins of the righteous which were carried there by the *blood of Christ*.

As the sins of the people were anciently transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary by the blood of the sin-offering, so our sins are, *in fact*, transferred to the heavenly sanctuary *by the blood of Christ*. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins *by which it had been polluted*, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded.¹⁸

Commenting upon the SDA interpretation, Dr. Raymond Cottrell, retired Seventh-day Adventist professor and scholar makes this insightful statement.

The context of Daniel 8:14 attributes the defiling of the sanctuary to the little horn. SDA’s interpretation attributes it to the transfer of confessed sins to the heavenly sanctuary by the priestly ministry of Christ. To pretend to ourselves that the SDA

¹⁶ Compare Dan. 8; 1 Maccabees 1–4, and E.G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 252.

¹⁷ E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 410.

¹⁸ E.G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266.

interpretation reads Daniel 8:14 in context then would thus be *to identify the little horn as Christ*. In other words, we can't have both context and the Adventist interpretation in so far as the Bible itself is concerned. Similarly in [Dan.] chapter 9:27 we attribute the cessation of sacrifice in offering to Christ's death on the cross. Whereas context equates it with the little horn taking away the continual burnt offering in chapter 8:11–13.¹⁹

It is evident that the doctrine of the SDA cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and investigative judgment is not supported by its one, main proof text.

The heavenly sanctuary

The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment teaches that Christ ministered in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary until 1844, and then, for the *first time*, entered into the Most Holy Place²⁰ to perform the antitypical Day of Atonement ministry. This, too, is without *any* biblical support and is contrary to clear Bible teaching.

Hebrews 6:19, 20 states:

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters *within the veil*, where Jesus *has entered* as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

¹⁹ Dr. Raymond Cottrell as quoted in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. A-115, 116.

²⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 421. Note also EGW's support of Crosier's article. "The Lord shew (sic) in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary...I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that Extra to every saint." Ellen G. White, *A Word to the "Little Flock,"* p. 12, May 30, 1847, reproduced in Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 171.

Notice that this text states that Christ *has entered* (Greek Aorist tense) within the veil. Hebrews was written in the first century after Christ, and clearly states that at that time Christ had already entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. That “within the veil” means the Most Holy Place is certain from Scripture. Every time the Old Testament uses this term in connection with the sanctuary services it always has reference to the veil separating the holy from the Most Holy Place.²¹ Every time the Old Testament uses the term “without the veil,” it refers to the veil separating the holy from the Most Holy Place.²² When the term “before the veil,” is used, it also refers to the veil separating the two apartments.²³

That Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary at His ascension is taught from a number of other references in Hebrews including the following:

The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing (Heb. 9:8 NIV).

He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12 NIV).

For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence (Heb. 9:24 NIV).

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,...(Heb. 10:19, 20 NIV).

²¹ See Ex. 26:33; Lev. 16:2, 12, 15; Num. 18:7.

²² See Ex. 26:35; 27:20, 21; 40:22.

²³ See Ex. 40:26; Lev. 4:5, 6, 17; 24:1–3.

Note how Ellen White contradicts the clear teachings of Scripture. She redefines the term, “within the veil,” to be the door between the outer apartment and outer court, contrary to all Scriptural usage.

The ministration of the priest throughout the year in the *first apartment* of the sanctuary, “*within the veil*” which formed the door and separated the holy place from the outer court, represents the work of ministration upon which Christ entered at His ascension... So did Christ plead His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners, and present before Him also, with the precious fragrance of His own righteousness, the prayers of penitent believers. Such was the work of ministration in the *first apartment* of the sanctuary in heaven.²⁴

The Book of Hebrews says Christ entered the Most Holy Place at the ascension, Adventists teach He entered there for the first time in 1844.²⁵ To do this, they must redefine the clear terms of Scripture.

A worthless, broken chain

The SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment cannot be found or proved logically anywhere in Scripture. It is dependent upon a proof-text, context-denying, reading-into-Scripture-what-is-not-there method of interpretation which uses a tenuous string of assumptions, most of which are contrary to the biblical evidence. This is the heritage of Miller’s

²⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 421. See also *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1 p. 159; *Early Writings*, p 251.

²⁵ It should be noted that many SDAs, especially Evangelical Adventists, now believe Christ did enter the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary at the ascension. However, that does not remove Ellen White’s endorsement of this “truth,” nor does it change the fact that her writings are still held as “a continuing and authoritative source of truth.”

“perfect chain of truth” endorsed by Ellen White’s visions. As a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, so conclusions based upon a string of assumptions are no better than the weakest assumption. Also, conclusions based upon a long string of dubious assumptions are mathematically highly unlikely to be correct.

Dr. Ford points out that the doctrine of the investigative judgment hangs on twenty-two assumptions. These are listed below and are taken from *Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment*.²⁶ In each of the following, Dr. Ford will state the assumption and give his evaluation which he encloses in parentheses. Following this, I give a short summary. My summary is simply to serve as a way to translate Dr. Ford’s summary into the visual image of a link in a chain. Please visualize each assumption as a link in a chain. For the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment to be correct, all twenty-two assumptions must be valid.²⁷

1. That Dan. 8:14 speaks of 2300 days (While Dan. 12 repeatedly uses the Hebrew word for days, it is not to be found in 8:14. Instead we have the ambiguous “evening-morning” which most apply to the evening and morning burnt offerings. Thus instead of 2300 days, if these exegetes are correct, only 1150 days are in view.)

—SDA assumption, probably incorrect. The first link in the chain is badly cracked.

2. That these 2300 “days” equal 2300 years. (Though it is quite impossible to prove that the year-day principle is a biblical datum, and even if we could, days²⁸ are not mentioned in either

²⁶ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 174–176.

²⁷ The 22 assumptions are all assertions made in the writings of EGW.

²⁸ Note: “days” are mentioned in the KJV, but the original simply says “evening-morning.”

8:14 or 9:24, so there is no basis to apply the principle in these instances.)

—SDA assumption, probably incorrect. The second link in the chain is cracked.

3. That these 2300 years begin centuries before the “little horn” began his attack on the sanctuary. (Though in context, the 2300 has been understood by many as applying to the length of time the little horn is trampling the sanctuary underfoot and suspending its daily offerings.)

—SDA assumption, definitely wrong. Daniel is clear that this time period refers to the time “*while* the transgression causes horror...” The third link in the chain is definitely broken.

4. That the 2300 years begin at the same time as the seventy weeks. (Though there is no scripture to say so. The Hebrew *Chatchak* means “cut” or “decree”, and there is no way of proving that the cutting off of the 490 from 2300 is intended.)

—SDA assumption, possible. The fourth link in the chain may or may not be cracked.

5. That it is possible to be certain of the exact year that the seventy weeks begin. (Though exegetes have been agreed on this point. Is the decree like that of 9:23, a heavenly one from God, or one from an earthly king?)

—SDA assumption, possible. The fifth link in the chain may or may not be cracked.

6. That the decree of Artaxerxes recorded in Ezra 7 has to do with the restoring and building of Jerusalem. (Though there is nothing in Ezra 7 that says this. The context says that this decree, like those of Cyrus and Darius, had to do with the temple. The magistrates were to enforce the temple laws. See Ezra 6:14 which places this decree among the temple decrees.)

—SDA assumption, definitely incorrect. The sixth link in the chain is broken.

7. That the decree of Ezra 7 “went forth” in 457 BC when Ezra had arrived in Jerusalem and set to work. (Though Ezra never says this, and the decree had been announced at least six months earlier. There is nothing in Daniel to say that this decree should be dated from the time of its implementation rather than its enunciation.)

—SDA assumption, probably incorrect. The seventh link in the chain is badly cracked.

8. That we can show 408 to be the time when the restoration of the city was completed. (Admitted even by Adventist scholars to be an impossible task.)

—SDA assumption, possible, but unprovable. The eighth link in the chain is uncertain.

9. That we can show that AD 27 was the date of Christ’s baptism. (A similarly difficult feat.)

—SDA assumption, possible, but unprovable. The ninth link in the chain is uncertain.

10. That AD 31 was the date of the crucifixion. (Almost all scholars hold to other years, not this one. Evidence from Grace Amadon’s researches, often used by SDA’s, is based on doubtful assumptions, as admitted by our own Commentary.)

—SDA assumption, probably incorrect. The tenth link in the chain is probably cracked.

11. That AD 34 was the date of the gospel going to the Gentiles. (Though there is no way of proving that AD 34 was the time of the stoning of Stephen, and Acts 13:46 presents the turning to the Gentiles at a much later date.)

—SDA assumption, probably incorrect. The eleventh link in the chain is probably cracked.

12. That the 2300 days end with the beginning of the antitypical Day of Atonement. (Though the Day of Atonement revolved around the sacrifice for sin, an event we believe took place about eighteen centuries earlier. The divesting of his

glorious robes by the high priest prefigured the incarnation of Christ which did not take place in 1844. The book of Hebrews clearly applies the Day of Atonement in antitype to Christ's priestly offering of Himself on Calvary, though the Christian era is included as we wait for our High Priest to come out.)

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The twelfth link in the chain is badly broken.

13. That until this date was reached, Christ was doing that work prefigured by the first apartment outside the veil. (Though Hebrews tells us that the work of that apartment symbolized the ineffectual offerings of the Levitical era when men had restricted access to God, and experienced outward, ceremonial cleansing rather than perfection of the conscience.)

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The thirteenth link in the chain is badly broken.

14. That the work symbolized by the second apartment of the Sanctuary was not to begin until over 1800 years after the cross. (Though Heb. 9:8, 12, 24, 25; 10:19, 20; 6:19, 20 says Christ entered "within the veil" at His ascension.) The sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat took place immediately after its shedding.

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The fourteenth link in the chain is badly broken.

15. That the sanctuary of Dan. 8:14 means the sanctuary in heaven. (Though the context is about the sanctuary on earth.)

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The fifteenth link in the chain is definitely broken.

16. That "cleansed" is an accurate translation of Dan. 8:14. (Though this is certainly not the case.)

—SDA assumption, probably wrong. The sixteenth link in the chain is broken.

17. That the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement was cleansed from defilement occasioned by the confession of sin

and ministration of blood. (Though Nu. 19:13, etc., indicate that the sanctuary was defiled when a person sinned, regardless of whether confession was made. In most cases, blood never went into the sanctuary.)

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The seventeenth link in the chain is definitely broken.

18. That the cleansing of the sanctuary in Dan. 8:14 has to do with the sins of the professed believers in Christ. (Though the context has to do with the defilement accomplished by Antichrist, and the host of God's people who are suffering, not sinning.)

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The eighteenth link in the chain is badly broken.

19. That this cleansing of Dan. 8:14 is also found in Dan. 7 in its judgment scene, and that the latter also has to do with investigation of the sins of the saints. (Though again in Dan. 7 as in 8, it is a wicked power which is the focus of the judgment.)

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The nineteenth link in the chain is clearly broken.

20. That Rev. 14:7 has to do with the same investigative judgment of the sins of the saints. (Though John never uses the word *krisis* other than in a negative sense—for unbelievers, and though the very next verse tells us that it is Babylon which endures the judgment, as the later chapters of Revelation also testify.)

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The twentieth link in the chain is badly broken.

21. That the verses like Acts 3:19 point to the investigative judgment. (None of such verses studied in context yield any such conclusions.)

—SDA assumption, contrary to evidence. The twenty first link in the chain is badly broken.

22. That much depends upon Oct. 22, 1844 as the beginning of the antitypical Day of Atonement. (Though Oct. 22, 1844 was not the day observed by contemporary Jews, even the majority of Karaites. Neither is there evidence that the baptism of Christ, or the stoning of Stephen took place on the Day of Atonement, which would have been necessary if the 49 years, the 434, 490, and 2300 years are each precise in terminus. In contrast, observe that Ellen White could write: “I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843...Ministers were convicted of the correctness of the positions taken on the prophetic periods” 1SG 132.²⁹ Observe she is talking about the 1843 terminus, not Oct. 22, 1844. Furthermore, she is speaking of periods ending then, not just one period. Miller had over a dozen, including the 6000 years, the seven times, the 1335 days, etc.)

—SDA assumption, clearly contrary to evidence. The last link in this “perfect chain of truth” is badly broken.

Consider the above assumptions as a chain of twenty-two links. On numerous occasions, as we have already seen, EGW makes the acceptance and understanding of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary necessary for salvation. Would you trust your life—yes, your eternal life—to a chain of four questionable links, eight cracked links, and ten broken links?

Chapter Summary

1. The one key text, Daniel 8:14, “the central pillar of Adventism” says nothing about 1844, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, or the investigative judgment.
2. EGW and the SDA church claim that Christ did not enter the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary until 1844. The book of Hebrews clearly teaches that

²⁹ This is a well known abbreviation in Adventist circles for Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 132.

Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary upon His ascension.

3. For the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment to be correct, as Ellen White taught, all of the twenty-two assumptions must be correct. Most of them are clearly in error.
4. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment doctrine is without *any* biblical support.

Chapter 11



Lumps Under the Rug

A Historical Evaluation

In previous chapters we have seen several ways Ellen White and the early Adventists dealt with their doctrinal errors. In this chapter we will briefly summarize and enumerate what we have already discovered, and add a number of other methods used by Ellen White and the SDA denomination in their ongoing attempt to relate to the doctrinal problems associated with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

Ways EGW and/or SDAs dealt with doctrinal error

1. *They made God responsible.*

Ellen White said God held his hand over the mistake on Miller's chart. When she claimed God removed his hand, early Adventists immediately saw their error.¹ She also said that God wanted them to meet with disappointment.²

2. *They changed or reinterpreted the predicted event.*

After the October 22, 1844, disappointment, Adventists changed the predicted event. They had prophesied that Christ would come to cleanse the *earth* on that date. When He did not, they said that He started cleansing the heavenly sanctuary on that date.³

3. *They redefined the "door."*

When early Adventists could no longer hold to the shut door of mercy, they redefined their "door theology." In 1849 they added the open door in Revelation 3:8.⁴ Later they reinterpreted the door in the parable of the ten virgins⁵—which at first they applied to 1844—to some time in the future at the *close* of Christ's ministration in the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary.⁶

¹ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 137, 138.

² *Ibid.*, p. 137.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 158.

⁴ Compare Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 151–160 with *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, pp. 269–271.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 268.

⁶ "But clearer light came with the investigation of the sanctuary question. They now saw that they were correct in believing that the end of the 2300 days in 1844 marked an important crisis. But while it was true that that door of hope and mercy by which men had for eighteen hun-

4. They changed or omitted the shut-door statements.

When republishing his early works, James White changed or omitted the shut-door statements from his writings.⁷

5. They suppressed the vision.

There is evidence that attempts were made to suppress the early visions of Ellen White which taught the shut door.⁸

6. They changed the vision.

When Adventists reprinted the first vision of Ellen White, they changed the vision by leaving out the words that taught the shut door.⁹

7. They contradicted themselves.

Some might even say they were untruthful. In the preface of *Early Writings*, a reprint of her early visions, it is stated:

dred years found access to God, was *closed*, another door was opened, and forgiveness of sins was offered to men through the intercession of Christ in the most holy. One part of His ministration had closed, only to give place to another. There was still an "open door" to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ was ministering in the sinner's behalf." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 429.

⁷ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 355.

⁸ Specifically the Camden Vision. See Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 148ff.

⁹ Compare Ellen White's first vision as recorded in *The Day Star*, as reproduced in Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 146, with Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, pp. 14, 15.

No change has been made in any idea or sentiment of the original work, and the verbal changes have been made under the author's own eye, and with her full approval.¹⁰

The actual facts are that James¹¹ and Ellen White left out the portion of her first vision which taught the closed door. EGW was less than candid—some would say dishonest—when she *denied* that her early visions taught the shut door.

For a time after the disappointment in 1844, I did hold, in common with the advent body, that the door of mercy was then forever closed to the world. *This position was taken before my first vision was given me.* It was the light given me of God that corrected our error, and enabled us to see the true position.¹²

The truth is, as we have seen, that not only did the first vision of EGW *teach* the shut door, but so did her second vision, a number of her other statements, and her Camden vision as well.

8. They redefined the term “within the veil.”

The biblical term, “within the veil” always refers to the Most Holy Place,^{13,14} and thus Hebrews 6:19, 20 *by itself*

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 3.

¹¹ James White was a printer and doubtless typeset this preface with his wife's full approval.

¹² Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 63.

¹³ See Ex. 26:33; Lev. 16:2, 12, 15; Num. 18:7.

¹⁴ See Adams, *The Sanctuary*, pp. 107–111. Here Adams plays theological hop-scotch. He shows how Ballenger pointed out the errors of EGW's interpretation of Heb. 6:19, 20. Then says, “...we can decide that it would be inappropriate and unwise to take up a position on the side of a renegade [Ballenger] who has been so vociferous in criticizing the church, especially someone whose theology Ellen G. White so strongly condemned.” Then Adams goes on to say that Ballenger “was correct in this particular.” His conclusion, however, is “there is *no essential conflict* between the affirmation of Hebrews 6:19, 20 and the assertion of our pioneers.” However, Hebrews 6:19 teaches that Christ

proves the whole scheme of Adventist theology wrong. Ellen White, without any biblical support, redefined this term to mean the curtain separating the holy place from the outer court.¹⁵

The above eight points are a summary of what has been covered thus far in this book. Now we turn to more ways EGW and/or SDAs dealt with doctrinal error.

More ways Adventists dealt with error

9. *EGW wrote testimonies to undermine critics.*

A. F. Ballenger, who at one time was a respected denominational leader, later developed his own sanctuary theology.¹⁶ His interpretation of the sanctuary was divergent from the mainstream SDA view¹⁷ and showed some of the errors of the doctrine of the SDA cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, including the errors of Ellen White's misuse of the term "within the veil."¹⁸ He circulated his interpretation which soon attracted the attention of Ellen White. To stop this "heresy," Ellen White used two more methods to support her error. Please read *carefully* the following quotation.

I long daily to be able to do double duty. I have been pleading with the Lord for strength and wisdom to reproduce the writings of the witnesses who were confirmed in the faith in the early history of the message. After the passing of the time in

entered the Most Holy Place at the ascension and SDA pioneers, including EGW, said Christ entered there for the *first time* in 1844. This certainly appears to be an essential conflict.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 421. See also Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1 p. 159; Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 251.

¹⁶ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 35–45.

¹⁷ For more details of his sanctuary theology see *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 36.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 37–42.

1844, they received the light and walked in the light, and *when the men claiming to have new light would come in with their wonderful messages regarding various points of Scripture, we had, through the moving of the Holy Spirit, testimonies* [in context these are her visions] *right to the point, which cut off the influence of such messages as Elder A. F. Ballenger has been devoting his time to presenting. This poor man has been working decidedly against the truth that the Holy Spirit has confirmed. When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained.*¹⁹

Ellen White, who before had condemned nearly everyone *outside* the little flock of Adventist believers who had not accepted her understanding of “truth,”²⁰ found that she could use the same technique to silence those *inside* denominational circles who disagreed with her. In the quotation above she said “we had testimonies right to the point, *which cut off the influence* of such messages as Elder A. F. Ballenger.” These “testimonies,” which she claims were “through the moving of the Holy Spirit,” were her own writings by which she silenced her opposition. Many, if not most, members of the SDA church considered her writings to have divine authority. Ellen White, herself, claimed that authority in hundreds of places.²¹ Therefore, when she fingered a man to be “*working decidedly against the truth,*” for all practical purposes, his influence and employment within Adventism were finished.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Loma Linda Manuscript*, No. 150.

²⁰ See E.G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 135, 136, 139, 140, 144, 151, 152.

²¹ Note the many “I was shown,” “I saw,” “I heard,” etc., statements in the quotations already listed in this book. For example, “I saw a great light from heaven shining upon the people of God...I heard the voices of angles crying, Behold the Bridegroom Cometh.” Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 140ff.

10. They taught that confirmed “truth” was never to be investigated.

Once “truth” was confirmed by the visions or testimonies of Ellen White, no thought was ever to be given to anything contrary to that “truth.” That “truth” was to stand forever.

When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained.²²

This statement deserves careful attention. It puts the believer in Ellen White in a position of being unable to objectively evaluate any “truth” confirmed by her “testimonies.” Could this be the reason why the SDA church continues to have such a following despite the fact that objective evaluation of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment shows it to be in error?²³ Could this be the reason so many documented errors in the published writings of Ellen White have never been seriously addressed by the SDA church?²⁴

²² Ellen G. White, *Loma Linda Manuscript*, No. 150.

²³ Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 25–66, A-107–116.

²⁴ See Gilbert M. Valentine, *The Shaping of Adventism* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992), pp. 215–229. For example, W. W. Prescott, an early, respected leader in Adventism, in his later years wrote: “It seems to me that we are betraying our trust and deceiving the ministers and the people. It appears to me that there is much more anxiety to prevent a possible shock than to correct error.” p. 227. See also Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 370. In a letter to “Dear Brother White” (Ellen White’s son) W. W. Prescott writes: “It seems to me that a large responsibility rests upon those of us who know that there are serious errors in our authorized books [books written by EGW] and yet make no special effort to correct them. The people and our average ministers trust us to furnish them with reliable statements, and they use

The above quotation is not an isolated statement of EGW. She says that it is Satan's plan to weaken faith in "the Testimonies" and if people lose faith in her writings they will end up in destruction.²⁵ She says that when she speaks in the *Testimonies*, "*it is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken.*"²⁶

our books as sufficient authority in their sermons, but we let them go on year after year asserting things which we know to be untrue. I cannot feel this is right....The way your mother's writings [Ellen White's] have been handled and the *false impression* concerning them which is still fostered among the people have brought great perplexity and trial to me. It seems to me that *what amounts to deception*, though probably not intentional, has been practiced in making some of her books, and that no serious effort has been made to disabuse the minds of the people of what was known to be their *wrong view concerning her writings*. But it is no use to go into these matters, I have talked with you for years about them, but it brings no change." p. 370.

²⁵ "It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the *Testimonies*. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 211. "Those who would in any way lessen the force of the sharp reproofs which God has given me to speak, must meet their work at the judgment." Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 19.

²⁶ Under the section, "The Nature and Influence of the Testimonies" we find this statement. "Those who are reproved by the Spirit of God [in context, addressed by EGW in her *Testimonies*] should not rise up against the humble instrument [EGW]. *It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken* to save them from ruin....God has given sufficient evidence, so that all who desire to do so may satisfy themselves as to the character of the *Testimonies*; and, having acknowledged them to be from God, *it is their duty* to accept reproof, *even though they do not themselves see the sinfulness of their course*....Those who despise the

I encourage the reader to thoughtfully contrast Ellen White's method of control with that of Paul's method of encouraging his listeners to check out what he, an apostle of Christ, taught.

And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed...(Acts 17:10-12).

Unlike Paul, Ellen White condemned people who examined her writings to see if they agreed with Scripture. They were not even to entertain the idea that she could possibly be wrong!

Ellen White's benchmark of "truth" appears to be the validity of the 1844 movement. Of Ballenger she wrote:

Elder Ballenger's proofs are not reliable. If received, they would destroy the faith of God's people in the truth that has made us what we are. We must be decided on this subject; for the points he is trying to prove *by scripture* are not sound.²⁷

11. They made multiple applications or interpretations.

As time passed, it again became evident that many, if not most, of the biblical applications made by Ellen White to the Advent movement of 1844-1851 were erroneous.²⁸

warning will be left in blindness to become self-deceived." Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 682.

²⁷ Ellen G. White, *Loma Linda Manuscript*, No. 150.

²⁸ For example, see Ellen White's use of the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:10 where she applied the "shut door" to 1844; where Christ was "married to the New Jerusalem" (*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 158); her application of the first angel's message of Revelation 14:6, 7 to the

She now started making what we will call multiple applications. There are dozens of examples which could be cited.²⁹ Only a few are given to demonstrate this method.

In her book *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, published in 1858, Ellen White applied “the first angel’s message” to the 1843 Miller prediction that Christ would come in that year.³⁰ EGW applied “the second angel’s message” to the call to come out of Babylon—the “fallen churches”—which rejected Miller’s date-setting for the second coming.³¹ EGW applied the third angel’s message to the reinterpretation of Miller’s “corrected” 1844 message of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the duty to keep the seventh-day Sabbath.³²

After 1844 there were some who concluded that the Adventist interpretation of the first and second angel’s messages of Revelation 14 was wrong. They felt the true fulfillment of these messages lay in the *future* and not in the 1844 movement. In response to these suggestions Ellen White wrote:

After the great disappointment in 1844, *Satan* and his angels were busily engaged in laying snares to unsettle the faith of the body. He was affecting the minds of individuals who had a personal experience in these things. They had an appearance of humility. *They changed the first and second messages, and pointed to the future for their fulfillment*, while others pointed far back in the past, declaring that they had been there fulfilled. These individuals were drawing the minds of the inexperienced

1843 Miller movement (*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 133–140); her use of Acts 3:19 as applying to the investigative judgment (*The Great Controversy*, p. 485); etc., all of which are clearly in error.

²⁹ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 339, 340 for over fifteen illustrations.

³⁰ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 133–140. Note the chapter title and the contents of the chapter.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140–143.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 162–168.

away, and unsettling their faith. *Some were searching the Bible to try to build up a faith of their own*, independent of the body. *Satan exulted in all this*; for he knew that those who broke loose from the anchor, he could affect by different errors and drive about with winds of doctrine. Many who had led in the first and second messages, denied them, and division and scattering was throughout the body.³³

Two things must be said about the above statement of EGW. First, she indicates it was Satan who was causing some to search the Scriptures to try to build up a faith of their own. Second, Ellen White states that Satan and his angels were behind those promoting a *future fulfillment* of the first and second angel's messages. With this well in mind, we see that Ellen White, herself, did exactly what she said Satan was behind.

The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it *then* had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; *but that fall was not complete*. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. *Not yet, however, can it be said that "Babylon is fallen."*³⁴

Here, Ellen White states that the real fulfillment of the second angel's message was yet future, *the same interpretation she earlier said came from Satan*. One begins to wonder who the angel was that showed her all these things.

Of interest to evangelicals at this point, is what EGW says about the other churches. Earlier, she said that the

³³ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 389.

pastors who rejected the various “truths” of early Adventism were rejected by God and under the delusions of Satan. Now, she states: “As they have continued to reject the special truths [Adventist message] for this time they have *fallen lower and lower*.” If the evangelical churches in 1844 were rejected by God and under the delusions of Satan, and have since then “fallen lower and lower,” as EGW asserts, Adventists must think evangelical churches are in a desperate condition now.³⁵

In *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, the chapter entitled “The First Angel’s Message,” is dedicated to Miller’s prediction that Christ would come in 1843.³⁶ In *The Great Controversy*, EGW applies the first angel’s message to the heavenly sanctuary investigative judgment.

The first angel’s message of Revelation 14, announcing the hour of God’s judgment and calling upon men to fear and worship Him....³⁷

Which one is correct?

This concept of multiple applications is a major dynamic in SDA theology. It is reflected in the title of an early Adventist publication called *Present Truth*. As the name suggests, the “truth” of yesterday may not be the same as the “truth” of today, nor is today’s “truth” necessarily the “truth” of tomorrow. Adventists, even their respected scholars, continue to speak of “the larger view,” meaning, of course, Ellen White’s later comments which often contradict the early visions which were full of errors.

In practice, this method of making multiple applications to cover up the errors of the past is very much like the method employed by Jehovah’s Witnesses: “When perse-

³⁵ This quote comes out of *The Great Controversy*, published in 1911.

³⁶ See Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 133–140.

³⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 379.

cuted in one text, flee to the next.” When I was trying to sort out the inconsistencies of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, I contacted a number of respected SDA theologians and Bible teachers. When I would show them the inconsistencies of the early statements, which are really the foundation of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, I was usually told, “Yes, but look at the ‘larger view’ Ellen White presents in...” and I was directed to a more nearly correct statement. However, this did not change the fact that the early erroneous statements are said to have come from God.

12. They used conflicting statements.

Ellen White used conflicting statements to “give balance” to other erroneous statements. Any “good Adventist” who reads this book will, by this time, have already accused me of selecting her “bad statements” while ignoring her “good statements.” However, if *all* her statements are “a continuing and authoritative source of truth,”³⁸ as stated in the *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*, why all the conflicting statements? As an example of this method, note the two following quotations:

When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained.³⁹ [In context, Ellen White is referring to her own visions as the final authority].

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the

³⁸ *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, No. 17, The Gift of Prophecy.

³⁹ Ellen G. White, *Loma Linda Manuscript*, No. 150.

basis of all reforms....Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.⁴⁰

Which one is correct? Obviously the second. However, in practice Adventists will often pick and choose among her writings to find "inspired" support for what they want to prove.

13. They used false analogy.

Another method of dealing with error, one used very successfully by Ellen White and SDA leaders, is false analogy. This method attempts to draw a close analogy between the experience of the early Adventists with the great men of faith in Scripture. This is designed to help Adventists identify with the Bible heroes and in so doing to find assurance in a similar experience.

In *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, in the chapter, "Advent Movement Illustrated," Ellen White makes several false analogies.

The disappointment of the disciples well represents the disappointment of those who expected their Lord in 1844. I was carried back to the time when Christ triumphantly rode into Jerusalem. The joyful disciples believed that he was then to take the kingdom, and reign a temporal prince...Their expectations were not realized in a single particular.⁴¹

In context, this statement attempts to give credence to Miller's predictions as genuine truth by the use of false analogy. EGW does not mention, however, that Jesus told the disciples on several occasions that he was to be rejected and killed.⁴² Nor does she admit that Miller was wrong in

⁴⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 595.

⁴¹ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 150.

⁴² Mt. 17:22; Lk. 9:44.

his predictions. Rather, she draws a comforting parallel implying that all is well.

On page 154 of the same chapter, she draws another false analogy between the experience of the disappointed Millerites who received mocking from those who had told them that Miller and his predictions were wrong.

I was pointed back to the translation of Elijah. His mantle fell on Elisha, and wicked children (or young people) followed him, mocking, crying, Go up thou bald head! Go up thou bald head! They mocked God, and met their punishment there. They had learned it of their parents. And those [people mocking the disappointed Millerites] who have scoffed and mocked at the idea of the saints' going up, will be visited with the plagues of God, and will realize that it is not a small thing to trifle with him.⁴³

Other than the mocking, there is no analogy. However, by stating, "I was pointed back..." Ellen White, implies that God gave her this analogy to comfort the little flock of Adventists. They would then identify with Elisha, a true prophet of God, who also underwent mockings. It is of interest that those who mocked Elisha did receive the judgment of God. As far as I know, those who mocked the Millerites for their erroneous theology received no such judgment—other than the condemnation of Ellen White.

14 & 15. They hid known problems and denied that a problem even existed.

The following fascinating—almost unbelievable—account will show two more ways the SDA church has responded to the errors of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

⁴³ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 154.

In 1980 retired SDA theologian Dr. Raymond Cottrell revealed some large lumps that had been swept under the SDA denominational rug many years earlier.⁴⁴

Dr. Cottrell, a trained scholar, skilled in Hebrew, and recognized by his friends as a man of high integrity, was assigned the position of Associate Editor of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Among other duties, he was specifically assigned to write commentary on the book of Daniel. As he studied Daniel 8, he was unable to come up with any biblical support for the investigative judgment. Therefore, he went to the main editor, F. D. Nichol, and explained his problem. Nichol advised him to seek counsel from the best Bible teachers in the SDA church. Thereupon, Dr. Cottrell prepared and distributed a questionnaire relating to the contextual problems of Daniel 8:14, with the necessary link to Leviticus 16. He sent this to eight teachers of Hebrew, several experienced Bible teachers, and a few respected denominational leaders. When the questionnaires were returned, *no one* had the answers. The best reason several committee members gave was, “the Spirit of Prophecy [Ellen White] so applied it.” Two members said it was “a fortunate accident” in translation.⁴⁵

The names were removed from the questionnaires and these were then given to General Conference President, R.

⁴⁴ Dr. Cottrell’s presentation is available on tape from the Loma Linda Adventist Forum. Most of it is printed in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. A-107–116. See also Dr. Cottrell’s tape of March 1984, “The Sanctuary Problem” available from the San Diego Adventist Forum, P.O. Box 3148 La Mesa, CA 91944-3148. Dr. Cottrell’s last paper on 1844 was read at the San Diego Forum on February 9, 2002. This is available at <http://www.jesusinstituteforum.org/AssetOrLiability.html>. Dr. Cottrell passed away January 12, 2003. He will long be remembered as a kind, careful, honest and loyal friend and scholar.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. A-112.

R. Figuhr. As a result, a super-secret committee⁴⁶ was formed called the “Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel.” This committee was chaired by Harry Lowe, and was comprised of the best SDA theologians the church had.⁴⁷ Their assignment was to find a way to honestly support the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment from the Bible. This committee met between 1961 and 1966. During this time, not only did committee members work on the problems, but others were asked to submit papers as well.⁴⁸ What did the committee conclude? Now we quote Dr. Cottrell.

The majority said that the Adventist interpretation can be established satisfactorily on the basis of the assumptions mentioned and that problems, if any, should be forgotten and that the committee should prepare a report that will strengthen the faith of our people in the traditional interpretation.⁴⁹

The minority said that to ignore the problems would be a tacit admission that we had no answers for them. Remember that the name of the committee was the Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel, and the majority was suggesting that we forget the problems and not say anything about them, and make

⁴⁶ It is my understanding that most of the members of the General Conference Committee at the time did not know about this ad hoc committee. It is said that Neil Wilson, a recent General Conference president, did not even know about this committee until about fifteen years later.

⁴⁷ Members of the committee were: “H. W. Lowe as chairman, and R. A. Anderson, Raymond F. Cottrell, Richard Hammill, Edward Heppinstall, W. G. C. Murdoch, D. F. Neufeld, Leo Odom, and W. E. Reed. Others later invited to meet with the committee included Earle Hilgert, S. H. Horn, Alger John, Graham Maxwell, and M. R. Thurber.” As quoted from “an unpublished manuscript” in Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. 62.

⁴⁸ Desmond Ford was one of those who submitted papers to the committee but was not a regular member of it.

⁴⁹ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, p. A-114.

the committee appear naive and foolish to knowledgeable SDAs and biblically literate non-SDAs.⁵⁰

Four different suggestions were made for a committee report they could all sign.

Our first suggestion was that we deal fairly with the problems and set forth both points of view. Well, the majority didn't want that.

So we came up with a second suggestion that the report of the committee be published without the names of the committee members attached to it. Well, they [majority] didn't want that. They wanted our names attached to it.

Three, we suggested that the members submit their papers for publication under their own names only.

Four, the minority should be permitted to withdraw from the committee in order that the majority may issue a unanimous report in keeping with its wishes. We offered to step outside the door while they took a vote so that it could be unanimous. Or, if they insisted, we were ready to withdraw from the committee completely.

Well, none of these suggestions were acceptable to the majority so the committee adjourned *sine die* and made no report after working five full years on the subject.^{51,52}

As a seminary graduate, pastor, and Bible teacher in the SDA church, I met many people who served on this committee, but I was never told about this committee nor of the doctrinal problems it was unable to solve. Had not Dr. Cottrell, after his retirement, shared this information, we might never have known that the best minds of Adventism worked diligently for five years, and could not find biblical support for the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. This, perhaps, should be called the SDA INVESTI-GATE. The

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. A-114.

⁵¹ Ford, 1844, pp. A-114, 115.

⁵² It is my understanding that Elder Lowe did, privately, write out a non-committal report for Elder Figuhr, who was then General Conference president.

least we can say is that a few top denominational leaders and the best SDA scholars *knew* that the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment was without biblical support. Sadly, however, there are still denominational leaders, and even a few scholars, who continue to promote the traditional teachings. Apparently, some, like the majority on the Committee on the Problems in the Book of Daniel, still feel that based upon the “traditional assumptions” any problems should be forgotten. They seem to believe that Denominational leaders should continue to do what they can to strengthen the faith of the SDA laity in the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. These are large lumps under the Seventh-day Adventist denominational rug.

16. They say Ellen White did not always understand her own visions.

Ellen White several times uses phrases such as: “Though this was not at first understood by Adventists...”⁵³ In recent conversations with Adventists I have asked them how they react to the errors in the early visions of Ellen White. One answer I received was that “EGW sometimes misunderstood her visions.” I don’t know how widely this reasoning is used in SDA circles. However, three things should be said about this way of dealing with the errors in the writings of EGW. First, it is the responsibility of the communicator to communicate. That is Communication 101. In essence, one could argue that the above reasoning is an underhanded way of making God responsible for the errors in the writings of EGW. Why did God not speak

⁵³ See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 429, 431.

more clearly? Second, if in fact EGW did misunderstand her visions, then this fact—if indeed it is fact—brings *all* her visions into question. How is one to tell which ones she understood and which ones she did not? The early, erroneous visions seem to be the ones where she speaks with the most authority: “I saw,” “said the angel,” “from the light given me,” etc. Third, in Scripture when an angel communicated to a person, there is a clear understanding of the communication.⁵⁴ When a Bible writer did not understand the vision, as was the case with Daniel,⁵⁵ he immediately stated his misunderstanding and did not try to put his own interpretation on it.

17 They say that God allowed the early errors of Adventism for the good of a “larger purpose.”

The early errors in the writings of EGW, such as the comprehensive endorsement of Miller’s methods and message, the test on date-setting, the shut door, and the multiple reinterpretations of “truth,” were wrong in themselves. However, some Adventists⁵⁶ say that the larger truth behind these errors is the integrity of 1844 as the fulfillment of Daniel 8:14, and the multi-million member church that has developed from these early Adventists.

⁵⁴ Hagar understood the angel (Gen. 16:1–14). Abraham understood the angel (Gen. 22:11–18). Please note that the message to Abraham, “And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 22:18), was not fully understood, but—and here is the important point—it was *true* nonetheless. It was not error that had to be changed and contradicted sometime later.

⁵⁵ “Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king’s business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it.” (Dan. 8:27).

⁵⁶ This was the reasoning told to me in private conversations with Adventist pastors.

I do not know how widespread this reasoning is, but it seems flawed to me. It undermines the integrity of the character of God. It promotes the ethics of “the end justifies the means.” It makes situational ethics God’s mode of operation. Not only that, but many of the early errors are *still* incorporated in the Adventist movement.

There is yet one more way some in the SDA church are currently (1995) dealing with this problem. This, however, we will save for the chapter entitled “Tampering With the Word.”

Chapter Summary

Ellen White and/or SDA church leaders have dealt with the errors in the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment and in the writings of Ellen White in the following ways:

1. They made God responsible.
2. They changed or reinterpreted the predicted event.
3. They redefined the “door.”
4. They changed or omitted the shut-door statements.
5. They may have suppressed the vision.
6. They changed the vision.
7. They contradicted themselves, perhaps to the point of dishonesty.
8. They redefined the biblical term “within the veil.”
9. They wrote testimonies to undermine critics.
10. They taught that no after-suppositions were to be entertained regarding “truth” which had been confirmed by the *Testimonies* of EGW.
11. They made multiple applications, interpretations or reinterpretations.
12. They used conflicting statements.
13. They used false analogy.

14. They hid known problems.
15. They denied that a problem even existed.
16. They say that EGW did not always understand her own visions.
17. They say that God allowed the early errors of Adventism for the good of a “larger purpose.”
18. The last and most alarming way some in the SDA church are currently seeking to cover up the error of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment will be covered in the chapter, “Tampering With the Word.”

Chapter 12



Is This Truth?

A Theological Evaluation

In Chapter 10 a brief biblical evaluation of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment was given. It was found to be without biblical support. This chapter will compare the teachings of this doctrine to Scripture. In other words, we will not be evaluating the (supposed) biblical basis for this doctrine as we did in Chapter 10, rather we will give a theological evaluation of some of the resulting teachings which spring from, and come packaged with, this doctrine.

Some early Adventists, including EGW, appear to have been very legalistic. In 1888 at the Minneapolis conference on righteousness by faith, two men, E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, brought teachings which began to move the church away from some of its early legalism. Ellen White seems to have moved forward in her understanding of the gospel at this point. In her later publications there are some statements which express the truth of justification by faith

in clear and accurate terms. For example, the following statement on justification by faith written in 1893 is a beautiful statement to which any evangelical could say a robust “Amen.”

When God pardons the sinner, remits the punishment he deserves, and treats him as though he had not sinned, He receives him into divine favor, and justifies him through the merits of Christ’s righteousness. The sinner can be justified only through faith in the atonement made through God’s dear Son, who became a sacrifice for the sins of the guilty world. No one can be justified by any works of his own. He can be delivered from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation of the law, from the penalty of transgression, only by virtue of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Faith is the only condition upon which justification can be obtained, and faith includes not only belief but trust.¹

The above understanding of the gospel, however, does not spring from the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, but came as a result of the teachings of others, including Waggoner and Jones.² With this short introduction, we will now look at the beliefs which came packaged with the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 389.

² I am not holding up the teachings of Waggoner and Jones as a benchmark of gospel clarity. Their understanding of the gospel was somewhat primitive. Nor is the statement of EGW cited above necessarily a true reflection of their teachings. Historically, however, Waggoner and Jones moved the church toward a clearer understanding of the gospel. Both Waggoner and Jones later left the SDA church under the rebuke of EGW. See the *Paulson Collection of EGW Letters*, pp. 130–135; *Spalding and Magan’s Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of EGW*, p. 328f; *Battle Creek Letters*, p. 92f.

Sin laden blood pollutes the sanctuary

Ellen White states:

As the sins of the people were anciently transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary *by the blood of the sin-offering*, so our sins are, in fact, transferred to the heavenly sanctuary *by the blood of Christ*. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been *polluted*, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded.³

The Bible, however, states that it is not blood which defiles the sanctuary, but sin. Illustrations of this can be seen in the two following Bible quotations.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “You shall also say to the sons of Israel, ‘Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, [this was a sin]....I will also set My face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given some of his offspring to Molech, *so as to defile My sanctuary* and to profane My holy name” (Lev. 20:1–3).

Anyone who touches a corpse, [this was a sin for an Israelite] the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, *defiles the tabernacle of the LORD*...(Num. 19:13).⁴

The Bible, contrary to the theology of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, consistently teaches that blood *cleanses* rather than defiles.

³ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266. See also, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 417–422, 425, 479–487; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 357–358. For a more complete discussion of this topic, see Nordon Winger, former SDA pastor, “Syllabus and Source Material for The Seminar on 1844, *The Sanctuary, and the Investigative Judgment*.”

⁴ See also Lev. 15:31.

And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are *cleansed with blood*, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Heb. 9:22).⁵

How much more will the *blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, *cleanse* your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb. 9:14).⁶

We see, then, that the teaching that blood defiles—an integral part of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment—is *contrary* to the clear teaching of Scripture.

Sins are not “blotted out” until the close of the investigative judgment

Adventists teach that when God forgives sin, the record of sin stays on the books of heaven in the sinner’s account and is not “blotted out” until one’s name comes up and passes the investigative judgment.

Ellen White wrote:

Angels of God have kept a faithful record of the lives of all, and they are to be judged according to their deeds. *In view of this Judgment* [the context is the investigative judgment], Peter exhorted the men of Israel: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your *sins may be blotted out*, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things...”⁷

Scripture, however, states that sins are blotted out at the time of repentance and forgiveness.

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Thy compassion *blot out my*

⁵ See also Lev. 12:7; 14:14, 17, 25, 28; Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 76, 77.

⁶ See also Lev. 14:52; 16:19.

⁷ Ellen White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 308.

transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and *cleanse me* from my sin...Hide Thy face from my sins, and *blot out all my iniquities* (Ps. 51:1–2, 9).

In the above Scripture the terms “blot out,” “wash,” and “cleanse” are used together in Hebrew parallelism indicating that the same, basic idea is involved with all three terms.

I have *blotted out*, (past tense) as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee (Isa. 44:22 KJV).

I, even I, am the one who wipes out [KJV says “I am he who *blotteth out*...”] your transgressions for My own sake; And *I will not remember* your sins (Isa. 43:25).

One of the key promises of the new covenant is that God will not remember our sins.

FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND *I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE* (Heb. 8:12).

“And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and *their sin I will remember no more*” (Jer. 31:34).

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn. 1:9).

As was pointed out above, the terms “blot out,” “wash,” and “cleanse” are used synonymously when referring to forgiveness. It is clear from these Bible references that this takes place *at the point* of repentance and forgiveness.

Again we see that the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is *contrary* to clear Bible teaching.

Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary *for the first time* in 1844.

This has been documented in previous chapters. EGW supported Crosier's statement.

I saw distinctly, and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that he for the *first time* entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary.⁸

The New Testament teaches that Christ entered into the Most Holy Place upon the ascension.⁹ Again we see that the theology of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is contradictory to the teaching of Scripture.

Judged on the basis of personal works or deeds

This teaching, perhaps more than any other, undermines the new covenant gospel of grace. In Ellen White's early descriptions of the investigative judgment it is obvious that the gospel was misunderstood. EGW taught that one is accepted or rejected in the investigative judgment based upon his *personal deeds*, rather than through faith in Christ. Where she does mention faith in Christ, at least in the early years, it is usually in the context of faith that *enables one to perfectly follow* Christ's *example* of obedience, rather than a trust in Christ's substitutionary righteousness. Some of

⁸ See Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, p. 126. See also Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266.

⁹ See Heb. 6:19; 9:8, 12, 24; 10:19, 20 NIV and review Chapter 10, section on the "Heavenly Sanctuary" where this has already been discussed.

her early statements can only be seen as Galatianism¹⁰ or rank legalism.

Day after day, passing into eternity, bears its burden of records for the books of Heaven. Words once spoken, *deeds* once done, can never be recalled. Angels of God have registered both the good and the evil. The mightiest conqueror upon the earth cannot call back the record of even a single day. *Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe.* Though they may be forgotten by us, *they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn.* They go before us to the Judgment.¹¹

We are individually to be *judged according to the deeds done in the body....*¹²

Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable. God will give faith and grace to overcome them...There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery...Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests therein involved. The Judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. Forty years has this work been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition, "Watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is." "Watch ye therefore,...lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping" (Mk. 13:33, 35, 36).

¹⁰ Galatianism is a mixture of faith and works. One trusts Christ for past sins, but then must develop his own personal righteousness by adherence to law. This second phase is often called sanctification. The error is not in teaching that a Christian should obey the law of Christ, but that his obedience becomes the *basis* of his ultimate acceptance by God. This erroneous teaching holds that one is saved by grace *and* his own diligent effort, even if that effort is empowered by God. Thus, in Galatianism, there is a mixing of faith and works *as the basis* of salvation.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 311.

¹² Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1887-03-22.

“If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief; and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”(REV. 3:3.) How perilous is the condition of those, who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure-lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments,—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence, “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.”

Every soul that has named the name of Christ has a case pending at the heavenly tribunal. It is court week with us, and the decision passed upon each case will be final.¹³

We must be careful not to confuse the investigative judgment with the judgment of rewards which *is* taught in Scripture. The investigative judgment is a salvation judgment to see who is *worthy* of eternal life. In the new covenant, as we will see more fully in Chapter 15, *salvation* judgment is based upon faith in Christ and not upon works, not even works of righteousness. Therefore, we again see that the teachings of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment are directly opposed to Scripture.

Perfectionism

In the early teaching of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment there is a theology of perfectionism. The “gospel” according to EGW seems to be the “good news” that Christ came and lived a life of perfect obedience to the Ten Commandment law and in so doing gave mankind an *example* so that *they* could do the same. If one has enough faith in Christ, then he, too, can live in perfect obedience to the Ten Commandment law. Not only can he, but if he is to live through “the time of

¹³ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, pp. 314, 315.

trouble”¹⁴ and experience the second coming of Christ, he *must* reach perfection.

The course of God’s people should be upward and onward to victory. A greater than Joshua is leading on the armies of Israel. One is in our midst, even the Captain of our salvation, who has said for our encouragement: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” He will lead us on to certain victory. What God promises, He is able at any time to perform. And the work He gives His people to do, He is able to accomplish by them. *If we live a life of perfect obedience*, His promises will be fulfilled toward us.¹⁵

As Jesus moved out of the Most Holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon his garment, and as he left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then no mediator between guilty man, and an offended God...*The saints in that fearful time, after the close of Jesus’ mediation, were living in the sight of a holy God, without an intercessor.*¹⁶

The law of God is the rule of God’s government, and through eternal ages it will be the standard of his kingdom. Those who trample upon its requirements, are trampling upon the authority of heaven, upon the throne of God. If we do not yield to its requirements in this life, learning to love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves, we shall meet with *no change in character at the appearing of Jesus.*¹⁷

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. *When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people*, then He will come to claim them as His own.¹⁸

¹⁴ Adventists believe that they will be present during the tribulation or as they call it, “the time of trouble.”

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 122.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 198.

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1892-06-21.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 69. See also *Counsels to Teachers*, p. 324.

Some SDAs would argue that Ellen White did not teach perfectionism. Her statement penned in 1885 would support this.

Why is it that so many claim to be holy and sinless? It is because they are so far from Christ. I have never dared to claim any such a thing. From the time that I was 14 years old, if I knew what the will of God was, I was willing to do it. You never have heard me say I am sinless. Those that get sight of the loveliness and exalted character of Jesus Christ, who was holy and lifted up and His train fills the temple, will never say it. Yet we are to meet with those that will say such things more and more.^{19,20}

However, EGW wrote in 1898 this statement:

As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life.²¹

Note the facts from the previous citations:

1. The fulfillment of God's promises to us are *conditional upon our "perfect obedience."*
2. God's people, still in their human state before the second coming of Christ, will have to live in "that fearful time" in the sight of a holy God *without an*

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, Manuscript 5, 1885, *Selected Messages*, Book 3, p. 354.

²⁰ "John does not once claim to be sinless. But his life was one of earnest effort to conform to the will of God. It was a living representation of Christian sanctification. He followed his Saviour closely, and had such a sense of the purity and exalted holiness of Christ, that his own character appeared, in contrast, exceedingly defective. And when Jesus in his glorified body appeared to John, one glimpse was enough to cause him to fall down as one dead. Such will ever be the feelings of those who know best their Lord and Master. The more closely they contemplate the life and character of Jesus, the less will they be disposed to claim holiness of heart, or to boast of their sanctification." Ellen G. White, *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 03-01-81.

²¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

- intercessor*. It is obvious that these people will have to be in a state of sinless perfection.
3. Ellen White states that there will be *no change in character at the second coming of Christ*.
 4. The second coming of Christ is tarrying until *the character of Christ* [which was sinless] *is perfectly reproduced in His people*.
 5. As Christ was perfect in His life, His followers are to be perfect in their lives.

These statements show that EGW did believe and teach perfection in the early years. This is the teaching which came bundled with the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. As in most areas of theology, EGW often appears to contradict herself. One can find EGW statements which teach perfection and those which deny it.

The new covenant gospel states unequivocally that we are saved by grace.²²

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that *not of yourselves*, it is the gift of God; *not as a result of works*, that no one should boast (Eph. 2:8–9).

He saved us, *not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness*, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Ti. 3:5).

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so *through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men*. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made

²² As well as some of EGW's later statements.

sinner, even so *through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous* (Rom. 5:17–19).²³

The New Testament does not teach human perfection *as a foundation for salvation*. We see the Soteriology of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment running diametrically opposed to the new covenant gospel of grace—and that has *major ramifications* as we will see in later chapters.

The judgment in Daniel 7 and 8 and Revelation 14 has reference to the investigative judgment of God's people.

As has been shown before, Daniel 8:14 is the key text for the investigative judgment.²⁴ EGW also applies the judgment mentioned in Daniel 7 to the investigative judgment. After quoting Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, and 14, she says:

Thus was presented to the prophet's vision the *opening of the investigative Judgment*. The coming of Christ here described is not his second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of days in Heaven to receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, which will be given him at the close of his mediatorial work. It is this coming, and not his second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days, in 1844. Attended by a cloud of heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies, and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of his ministration in behalf of man,—to perform the work of *investigative Judgment*, and to *make an atonement* for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.²⁵

In the typical system, which was a shadow of the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ, the cleansing of the sanctuary was the

²³ See Ratzlaff, "The Testing Truth," in *Sabbath in Christ*, for a more complete presentation of the new covenant gospel.

²⁴ See Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 258.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 258, 307, 308.

last service performed by the high priest in the yearly round of ministration. It was the closing work of the atonement—a removal or putting away of sin from Israel. It prefigured the closing work in the ministration of our High Priest in heaven, in the removal or blotting out of the sins of His people, which are registered in the heavenly records. This service involves a work of investigation, a work of judgment; and it immediately precedes the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; for when He comes, every case has been decided. Says Jesus: “My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. *It is this work of judgment, immediately preceding the second advent, that is announced in the first angel’s message of Revelation 14:7: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.”*²⁶

We must realize, however, that the judgment in Daniel 7 and 8 and in Revelation 14 does *not* have God’s people in view, but it is the wicked who are the focus of the judgment.²⁷

The explanation of the vision of Daniel 7 given in verses 23–26 clearly shows that this judgment deals with the evil fourth beast, a wicked power who speaks out against God and His people.

And *he* will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the *court will sit for judgment*, and *his* dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever (Dan. 7:25, 26).

Likewise, the judgment in Revelation 14, which EGW applies to the investigative judgment of *only* God’s professed people, in context deals with the wicked power

²⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 352.

²⁷ It is true that the people of God are benefited by the judgment upon the wicked: their enemies are destroyed.

termed “Babylon.” As this topic is developed and explained, we read of *Babylon* making all nations drink of her immorality.²⁸ Those who worship the *beast* are described as burning.²⁹ Revelation 17 and 18 describe this judgment in these terms:

And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I shall show you *the judgment* of the great harlot who sits on many waters” (Rev. 17:1).

For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the *Lord God who judges her* is strong. And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, “Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! *For in one hour your judgment has come*” (Rev. 18:8–10).

Notice the similarity of terms in Revelation 14 and Revelation 18 such as “hour,” “Babylon,” and “judgment.”

And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the *hour* of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters” (Rev. 14:7).

“...for in *one hour* such great wealth has been laid waste!” And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance (Rev. 18:17).

²⁸ “And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.’” (Rev. 14:8).

²⁹ “And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” (Rev. 14:11).

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her (Rev. 18:20).

These verses make clear that the coming judgment, mentioned in Daniel 7 and 8 and in Revelation 14, deals with God's judgment *against evil*. EGW, however, states that this judgment deals *only* with *the professed people of God*.³⁰

Again, we find this teaching concomitant to the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment to be *contrary* to the Bible.

An incomplete atonement

The incomplete atonement has been a thorn in SDA's flesh for many years.

The first Adventist statement of belief, the *Declaration of 1872*, denied that the atonement began on the cross.³¹

Most, if not all, SDA scholars now hold that the atonement was complete at the cross. This, however, does not remove EGW's endorsement of the incomplete atonement, nor does it change the SDA statement of beliefs which hold the writings of EGW as "a continuing and authoritative source of truth." Thus, the SDA dilemma of how to deal

³⁰ "In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of *final atonement* and *investigative judgment* the *only cases considered are those of the professed people of God*. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

³¹ Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1989), p. 70.

with this problem continues. The SDA unfinished atonement finds its foundation in the “vision” of Edson which was written out by Crosier, which received EGW’s strong endorsement by a “vision” from God. However, it *remains* as part of the teaching connected with the doctrine of the SDA cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

Thus those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the *closing work of atonement* preparatory to His coming.³²

Contrary to EGW, the Bible clearly states that the atonement was completed at the cross.

When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, “*It is finished!*” And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit (Jn. 19:30).

For by one offering *He has perfected* for all time those who are sanctified (Heb. 10:14).

Ellen White, in harmony with her teaching of an incomplete atonement at the cross, pictures Christ as *now* having a *standing, pleading* ministry before the Father.

Therefore the announcement that the temple of God was opened in heaven and the ark of His testament was seen points to the *opening* of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 as Christ entered there to perform the *closing work of the atonement*. Those who by faith followed their great High Priest as He *entered* upon His ministry in the most holy place, beheld the ark of His testament. As they had studied the subject of the sanctuary they had come to understand the Savior’s change of

³² Ibid., p. 422. See also *Early Writings*, p. 253; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 357, 358; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 161; Knight, *Rise of Sabatarian Adventism*, pp. 126, 152, 171.

ministration, and they saw that He was *now officiating before the ark of God, pleading His blood in behalf of sinners.*³³

Then again was held up before me those who were not willing to dispose of this world's goods to save perishing souls by sending them the truth while Jesus *stands* before the Father *pleading His blood...*³⁴

The book of Hebrews is the one New Testament book which gives a thorough, Christ centered, interpretation of the Old Testament sanctuary services. It, in contrast to EGW, *always* pictures Christ *seated* having finished the atonement.

...then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO THY WILL." He takes away the first [covenant] in order to establish the second [covenant]. By this will we *have been* [past tense] sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*. And every [old covenant] priest *stands daily* ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered *one sacrifice* for *sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God*, waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. For by *one offering He has perfected for all time* those who are sanctified (Heb. 10:9–14).

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and *perfecter of faith*, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has *sat down* at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 10 showed that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is without biblical

³³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 433.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 50. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 273; *Signs of the Times*, 1850-64-01; 1890-06-02; *Review and Herald*, 1870-04-19; 1911-06-29.

support. In Chapter 11 the many ways the SDA church has reacted to its doctrinal errors were enumerated. In this chapter we saw that the theological beliefs that spring from, or come packaged with, the investigative judgment, not only contradict Scripture at nearly every point, they are a gross perversion of the gospel.³⁵ This is serious. The SDA church claims to be *the* true, remnant church, with the prophetic ministry of Ellen White as one of the identifying marks of its authenticity.³⁶ To this day,³⁷ in recent, official publications of the church, the writings of Ellen White are referred to as “an inspired commentary.” While we will deal more fully with this claim in the chapter entitled “Marks of a Cult,” it ought to cause Seventh-day Adventists to do some serious, objective thinking.

**Teachings of the
investigative judgment:**

Sin laden blood pollutes

Sins blotted out after 1844

Emphasis on personal works

Must achieve personal
perfection of character³⁸

**Teachings of
Scripture:**

Blood cleanses

Sins blotted out at repentance

Emphasis on faith in Christ

Must trust in Christ’s sinless
perfection

³⁵ Please note that I am not saying all Adventists today have a perverted gospel. Nor am I saying that everything EGW wrote demonstrated a perverted gospel. What I am saying is that the teaching presented in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment perverts, or at best compromises, the gospel.

³⁶ See Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ*, “The Sabbath and Seventh-day Adventists,” where the author deals in greater depth with the SDA claim to be the remnant church of Bible prophecy.

³⁷ December 1995.

³⁸ I am not saying that all the people in the SDA church believe in perfectionism now. However, the EGW statements in connection with the

Judgment deals with
God's people

Judgment deals with
the wicked

The atonement was not
complete at the cross

The atonement was
complete at the cross

Christ has a standing,
pleading ministry

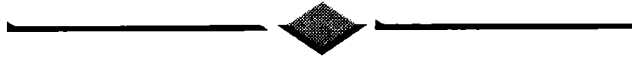
Christ has a seated,
victorious ministry

These facts speak for themselves. Our theological evaluation of the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment find it "weighed in the balances and found wanting."

investigative judgment seem to support this view, and from my experience in the SDA church there were, and doubtless still are, some Historic Adventists who hold this view.

**Truly, truly, I say to
you, he who hears
My word, and
believes Him who
sent Me, has eternal
life, and does not
come into judgment,
but has passed out
of death into life**

Chapter 13



Living in the Judgment

An Experiential Evaluation

In this chapter we turn to a practical evaluation of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. How does the theology of this doctrine, which we looked at in the last chapter, work its way out in the *experience* of those who believe in it?

No assurance of salvation

Because one is expected to reach a state of personal holiness which would allow for living in that “fearful time” “without an intercessor,” there is little *real* assurance of salvation in Historic Adventism. Ellen White taught in several places that one should *never* say he was “saved.”

Why? Because there was no way to be sure if all sins were confessed *and* forsaken. We must remember that EGW taught that unconfessed sins, even sins *which had been forgotten*, would stand against one in the investigative judgment.¹ Notice carefully what she says in the following quotations.

Those who are teaching this doctrine (grace) today have much to say in regard to faith and the righteousness of Christ; but they *pervert the truth*, and make it serve the cause of error. They declare that *we have only to believe on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all-sufficient: that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner's credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfills the law for us, and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God.* This class *claim that Christ came to save sinners*, and that He has saved them. "I am saved," they will repeat over and over again. But are they saved while transgressing the law of Jehovah?—No; for the garments of Christ's righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. *Such teaching is a gross deception*, and Christ becomes to these persons a stumbling block as He did to the Jews,—to the Jews, because they would not receive Him as their personal Saviour, to these professed believers in Christ, because they separate Christ and the law, and regard faith as a substitute for obedience. They separate the Father and the Son, the Saviour of the world.

¹ "Great and small, high and low, rich and poor, are to be judged 'out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Day after day, passing into eternity, bears its burden of records for the books of Heaven. Words once spoken, deeds once done, can never be recalled. Angels of God have registered both the good and the evil. The mightiest conqueror upon the earth cannot call back the record of even a single day. Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe. *Though they may be forgotten by us, they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn.* They go before us to the Judgment." Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 311.

Virtually they teach, both by precept and example, that Christ, by His death, saves men in their transgressions.²

We are *never* to rest in a satisfied condition, and cease to make advancement, saying, “*I am saved.*” When this idea is entertained, the motives for watchfulness, for prayer, for earnest endeavor to press onward to higher attainments, cease to exist. *No sanctified tongue will be found uttering these words till Christ shall come, and we enter in through the gates into the city of God.* Then, with the utmost propriety, we may give glory to God and to the Lamb for eternal deliverance. *As long as man is full of weakness,—for of himself he cannot save his soul,—he should never dare to say, “I am saved.”* It is not he that putteth on the armor that can boast of the victory; for he has the battle to fight and the victory to win. It is he that endureth unto the end that shall be saved. The Lord says, “If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” If we do not go forward from victory to victory, the soul will draw back to perdition. We should raise no human standard whereby to measure character. We have seen enough of what men call perfection here below. God’s holy law is the only thing by which we can determine whether we are keeping his way or not. *If we are disobedient, our characters are out of harmony with God’s moral rule of government, and it is stating a falsehood to say, “I am saved.”* No one is saved who is a transgressor of the law of God, which is the foundation of his government in heaven and in earth.³

No man can say, I am saved, until he has endured test and trial, until he has shown that he can overcome temptation. Those who fail to do the work which God has said should be done soon lose the right perception of spiritual things, and become blinded as to the character of the truth. They are unfitted to do the work which would make them complete in Christ.⁴

As stated above, there is little real assurance of salvation in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment theology.

² Ellen G. white, *Bible Echo*, 1897-02-08.

³ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1890-06-17.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Kress Collection*, p. 120.

How do the EGW statements cited above⁵ add up with the new covenant gospel of grace?

EGW statements on salvation contrasted with Bible teaching

EGW says the imputed righteousness of Christ is not enough to save sinners.⁶ The Bible, however, says:

For if while we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, *we shall be saved by His life* (Rom. 5:10).

EGW says that the garments of Christ's righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. She teaches that Christ cannot save people "in their transgression."⁷ The Bible says:

[God]...even *when we were dead in our transgressions*, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) (Eph. 2:5).

EGW calls the teaching that one can say "I am saved" a "gross deception."⁸ The Bible says:

...that *if you confess* with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and *believe* in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, *you shall be saved* (Rom. 10:9).

EGW said it was the *false teachers* who claim that "Christ came to save sinners."⁹ The Bible says:

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners*, among whom I am foremost of all (1 Tim. 1:15).

⁵ Please note that I am not saying all of EGW statements teach a false gospel, but those springing from the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment often do.

⁶ Ellen G. white, *Bible Echo*, 1897-02-08.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

EGW said as long as a man is full of weakness he cannot ever say, "I am saved."¹⁰ The Bible says:

For by grace you *have been saved* through faith; and that *not of yourselves*, it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). For *while we were still helpless*, at the right time Christ died for the *ungodly* (Rom. 5:6).

EGW teaches that we cannot say, "I am saved," as long as our characters are out of harmony with the law.¹¹ The Bible says:

[God], who *has saved us*, and called us with a holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity (2 Tim. 1:8, 9).

EGW teaches that no sanctified tongue will ever say, "I am saved," before the second coming of Christ.¹² The Bible says:

...and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved*, you and your household" (Acts 16:30, 31).

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may *know* that you have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13).

EGW teaches that no man can say, "I am saved," *until he has endured test and trial, until he has shown that he can overcome temptation*.¹³ The Bible says:

He *saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness*, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Ti. 3:5).

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1890-06-17.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ellen G. White, *The Kress Collection*, p. 120.

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that *his spirit may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5). If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Cor. 3:15).¹⁴

EGW teaches that when one claims to be saved the *motives* for watchfulness, for prayer, and for earnest endeavor to press onward to higher attainments, cease to exist.¹⁵ The Bible says:

For the *love of Christ controls us*, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died (2 Cor. 5:14).

¹⁴ In addition to the preceding Bible verses, the following biblical statements teach beyond a shadow of a doubt that we can and should say we are saved, and the basis of that assurance is *not* in our works, but solely in the grace of God. "But the witness which I receive is not from man, but I say these things that you may be saved." (Jn. 5:34). "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (Jn. 10:9). "AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERY ONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." (Acts 2:21). "...praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who *were being saved*." (Acts 2:47). "...and he shall speak words to you by which you *will be saved*, you and all your household." (Acts 11:14). "But we believe that *we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus*, in the same way as they also are." (Acts 15:11). "For in hope *we have been saved*, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees?" (Rom. 8:24). "...for WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Rom. 10:13). "For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us *who are being saved* it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:18). "...by which also *you are saved*, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you *believed* in vain." (1 Cor. 15:2). "For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are *being saved*." (2 Cor. 2:15).

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1890-06-17.

See also Paul's beautiful statement on the motivation of *grace* in Phillippians 3:8–16.¹⁶

Evaluation

We again see a pattern that has been manifest over and over again in our study. What Ellen White says is “truth” is error. What she says is a “distortion of the truth” is the clear teaching of the New Testament. That she is perverting the gospel of grace in these statements is evident. In her earlier writings, especially those in connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, there is often a complete misunderstanding of the gospel.

Pervasive sin

That sin is pervasive in the human heart is no distortion of truth. The new covenant has a higher standard of

¹⁶ “More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.” (Phil. 3:8–16).

morality than the old covenant.¹⁷ This fact would be bad news if it were not also true that Christ is our righteousness and, “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.”¹⁸

We are saved by *His* life¹⁹ not our works,²⁰ not even works done in righteousness.²¹ In the writings of EGW, however, her testimony against sin is often found in the context of *personal performance in order to be found worthy in the day of judgment*. The following are only sprinklings of what could be listed.

The time that you spend standing before the glass preparing the hair to please the eye, should be devoted to prayer and searching of heart. There will be *no place for outward adornment in the sanctified heart*; but there will be an earnest, *anxious* seeking for the inward adorning, the Christian graces—the fruits of the Spirit of God.²²

Every hour’s work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. *The record of wasted moments and unimproved opportunities must be met when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened and everyone shall be judged according to the things written in the books.*²³

Ellen White said making, exchanging, or displaying photographs of family pictures was “a species of idolatry.”

This making and exchanging photographs is a species of idolatry.²⁴

In many families the mantel-shelves, stands, and tables are filled with ornaments and pictures. Albums, filled with photo-

¹⁷ See Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ*, pp. 293–300.

¹⁸ See Rom. 5:20.

¹⁹ See Rom. 5:10.

²⁰ See Rom. 3:28.

²¹ Ti. 3:5.

²² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 162.

²³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 453.

²⁴ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1907-06-13.

graphs of the family and the photographs of their friends, are placed where they will attract the attention of visitors. Thus the thoughts, which should be upon God and heavenly interests are brought down to common things. *Is not this a species of idolatry?* Should not the money thus spent have been used to bless humanity, to relieve the suffering, to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry? Should it not have been placed in the Lord's treasury to advance His cause and build up His kingdom in the earth?²⁵

It is a sin to forget, a sin to be negligent. If you form a habit of negligence, you may neglect your own soul's salvation and at last find that you are unready for the kingdom of God.²⁶

It is a sin to be sick; for all sickness is the result of transgression.²⁷

Believers are not to colonize in any place. *It is a sin in the sight of God for those who know the truth to settle down as has been done in Battle Creek,* and then refuse to see that the time has come to change the base of operations, because there are other parts of the vineyard in need of help.²⁸

²⁵ Ellen G. White, *Bible Echo*, 1901-01-14. See also, *Review and Herald*, 1901-05-14. "As I visited the homes of our people and our schools, I see that all the available space on tables, what-nots, and mantelpieces is filled up with photographs. On the right hand and on the left are seen the pictures of human faces. God desires this order of things to be changed. Were Christ on earth, He would say, 'Take these things hence.' I have been instructed that these pictures are as so many idols, taking up the time and thought which should be sacredly devoted to God." *Review and Herald*, 1901-09-10. "The many, many photographs in your houses are a dishonor to God. *They bear silent witness that you have backslidden from righteousness.* I look to heaven and cry, 'Lord, how long shall this evil divert means from thy treasury?'"

Review and Herald, 1901-11-26.

²⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 358.

²⁷ Ellen G. White, *Health Reformer*, 1866-08-01.

²⁸ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1903-08-20.

It is a sin to place poorly prepared food on the table, because the matter of eating concerns the well-being of the entire system.²⁹

Never should a morsel of food pass the lips between meals.³⁰

...swine's flesh is unfit for food.³¹

Cheese is still more objectionable; [than butter] it is wholly unfit for food.^{32,33}

The exhibitions in the bicycle craze are an offense to God. His wrath is kindled against those who do such things.³⁴

Parents, above every thing, take care of your children upon the Sabbath. *Do not suffer them to violate God's holy day by playing in the house or out of doors.* You may just as well break the Sabbath yourselves as to let your children do it, and when you suffer your children to wander about, and suffer them to play upon the Sabbath, *God looks upon you as Sabbath-breakers.*³⁵

The requirement of God concerning those that shall enter the pearly gates, is that they be like Jesus, that they bear his image, and have his mind. *They are to imitate his example, and live his life.*³⁶

Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; *flesh will cease to*

²⁹ Ellen G. White, *Southern Watchman*, 1901-10-30.

³⁰ Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 50. See also, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 373.

³¹ Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, p. 313.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 302.

³³ Two days before I revised this chapter I received a phone call from a SDA who had just read, *Sabbath in Crisis*. He was a strong believer in EGW and shared with me the terrible guilt he had when he went out to eat with others where macaroni and cheese were served. He felt he was sinning by eating cheese. He is now in counseling with one who specializes in working with cult victims.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 66.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1854-09-19.

³⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, 07-09-94

*form a part of their diet. We should ever keep this end in view and endeavor to work steadily toward it. I cannot think that in the practice of flesh eating we are in harmony with the light which God has been pleased to give us.*³⁷

*Without perfection of character no one can enter the pearly gates of the city of God, for if, with all our imperfections, we were permitted to enter that city, there would soon be in heaven a second rebellion. We must first be tried and chosen, and found faithful and true. Upon the purification of our character rests our only hope of eternal life.*³⁸

Personal Experience

My wife, Carolyn, and I were both fourth generation SDAs. Carolyn had her first twelve grades in SDA schools, and I attended SDA schools from first grade through seminary. I served as a SDA pastor and teacher and have read nearly all of Ellen White's books.³⁹ I accepted her writings on an equal authority with the Bible for many years of my life. Carolyn and I know first hand what it means to live in the investigative judgment. I also know the weight of guilt that investigative-judgment theology has imposed upon others whom I have ministered to through the years.

Ellen White teaches that when one's name comes up in judgment, his destiny will be determined by his character development at that moment. Following are a few of her statements, with my comments, from the chapter entitled,

³⁷ Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 383.

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 15, p. 36 "The Sabbath a Sign; The Importance of Attention to Little Things." *Sermons and Talks*, Vol. 2, p. 294.

³⁹ I say "nearly all" as I have not read the ones published after I left the SDA ministry in 1981. The SDA church has recently released 21 volumes of previously unpublished materials.

“The Investigative Judgment,” in *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, pp. 307–315.

Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe. Though they may be forgotten by us, they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn. They go before us to the Judgment.⁴⁰

Who could meet this test? Whose motives are one hundred percent right all the time? How does one remember sins which have been forgotten? This is not the gospel, it is condemnation.

The use made of *every* talent will be scrutinized. Have we improved the capital intrusted us of God? Will the Lord at his coming receive his own with usury? No value is attached to the mere profession of faith in Christ; nothing is counted as genuine but that love which is shown by works.⁴¹

The fatal flaw in trusting one’s works is that one never knows when he has done *enough*. Who can stand when God makes a scrutiny of the use of *every* talent?

Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour’s mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. *The hours heretofore given to pleasure, to display, or to gain-seeking, should now be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth.* The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative Judgment should be *clearly understood* by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be *impossible* for them to exercise the faith essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill.⁴²

A careful reading of the above quotation will fill the best saint with guilt. In essence, those who give time to pleas-

⁴⁰ *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 311.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 312, 313.

ure, display or are involved in “gain-seeking” should now take that time and devote it to prayer. Most people find “gain-seeking” to be part of good Christian stewardship. It is not earning money or having money that is wrong. Money becomes a snare when it becomes the driving force in the life, to the detriment of other Christian virtues.

EGW says that the people of God must “clearly understand” the investigative judgment or it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith essential for this time. In all my years, in and out of Adventism, I have yet to find *anyone* who “clearly” understands the investigative judgment and who can support it from Scripture.

The Judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. Forty years has this work been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. *In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review.* At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour’s admonition, “Watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.” *“Watch ye therefore,...lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.”*⁴³

While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure-lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments,—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence, “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.”⁴⁴

Every soul that has named the name of Christ has a case pending at the heavenly tribunal. It is court week with us, and the decision passed upon each case will be final.⁴⁵

When I was a SDA, I remember reading this chapter and feeling the weight of guilt. What if my name would come up when I was having fun playing volleyball? What if my

⁴³ Ibid., p. 315.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

name would come up when I was purchasing new clothes? What if my name would come up when I was focused on earning a livelihood? What if my name would come up in judgment when I had an impure thought? Or, worse yet, had my name already come up? Perhaps my doom was already sealed?

In the 12th grade we studied the investigative judgment in Bible class. Carolyn and I both remember the three types of reactions the students had to this teaching. One group completely gave up hope and figured they could never develop the perfection of character required. They became careless in their Christian life. Another group—the one I opted for—kept trying, hoping, but living in guilt. A third group believed they had arrived and were perfect and looked down on everyone else.

Over the years I have counseled a number of people who have come from conservative, SDA backgrounds. Most are filled with guilt and fear. I have found that it often takes a long period of time—sometimes years—to help them get rid of false guilt and accept the new covenant gospel of grace. I thank God that the gospel is now being taught in some SDA churches. However, the investigative judgment continues to be taught, even at official levels,⁴⁶ and the two do not mix.

The experience of continually living with the pending event of one's name suddenly, without warning, coming up in review before God and having one's destiny determined by his character development *at that point in time* is indeed a fearful thing. What a contrast there is between living under the investigative judgment and living under the joyous good news of acquittal in Christ proclaimed in the Epistles of the New Testament!

⁴⁶ See the Adult Sabbath School lessons, *Three Angeles' Messages*.

The investigative judgment takes away the assurance and the joy of the Christian life. How good it is to know that there is no such thing as the investigative judgment!⁴⁷

For by *grace* you have been saved *through faith*; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; *not as a result of works*, that no one should boast (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Chapter Summary

Living under the EGW/SDA investigative judgment creates a guilt trip. There is no assurance of salvation. One can never know or say he is saved. There are impossible standards to meet. It is a sin to eat between meals, get sick, or forget. It is wrong for one to spend time fixing one's hair, having fun, or pursuing financial gain. Taking, exchanging or displaying photographs is a species of idolatry. If you plan on being translated⁴⁸ at the second coming, then you must be a vegetarian. And don't forget, cheese is wholly unfit for food. This list of Ellen White's requirements could be *greatly* expanded. Living in the investigative judgment produces a latent anxiety which is very much evident in the early writings of EGW. She uses the term "solemn warning" nearly one hundred times. One never knows if he is *good enough* to pass the searching investigation of God. EGW says: "upon the purification of *our* character rests our *only* hope of eternal life."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ See chapter, "I've Been Acquitted—The Good News of Judgment."

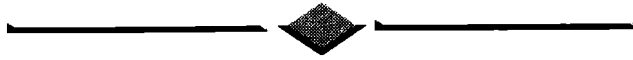
⁴⁸ A term used by SDAs for the rapture. However, the way SDAs use the term, it is not identical to the rapture.

⁴⁹ Ellen G. White, "The Sabbath a Sign; The Importance of Attention to Little Things." *Sermons and Talks*, Vol. 2, p. 294, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 15, p. 36,

The SDA teaching of the investigative judgment is a serious theological error, a blatant perversion of the gospel. It has also done untold damage to thousands of lives who have tried to live under the impossible requirements of its gloom and doom.

From an experiential viewpoint, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment—Adventism’s unique “contribution” to Christian theology—is again “weighed in the balances and found wanting.”

Chapter 14



We Knew it Was Wrong— But...

An Ethical Evaluation

Within traditional Adventism there has developed what could be called “vindication theology.” It finds its roots in the writings of Ellen White, and is intimately tied to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment theology. It goes something like this. Satan has maligned God’s character before the universe. There are several “issues” in the great controversy between Christ and Satan that have not yet been fully resolved. Satan has claimed that man cannot

keep God's law. His evidence for this charge is the record of sins he has caused God's people to commit. While it is true that Christ kept the law perfectly, Satan has claimed that no one else has been able to do this, therefore, his claim still stands. Vindication theology is about this issue, this charge of Satan, and holds that the last generation will prove before the universe that man can, with God's empowering grace, perfectly obey God's holy law.^{1,2} This is the underlying reason why we find Ellen White teaching that God's people will live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. This is why SDAs teach there will be no change in character when Christ comes. This is why there must be perfect obedience demonstrated by the last generation. This is why EGW says:

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.³

¹ "With sobering timeliness we study the subject of God's investigative judgment on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary...of its commencement in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary on October 22, 1844. Through this judgment work God has committed Himself to explain completely to the universe of unfallen beings His work of redemption, and His perfectly fair and loving way of dealing with sin and sinners. The judgment settles all accusations, doubts, and concerns about the justice and goodness of God." Commentary, Adult Sabbath School Lessons, *Three Angel's Messages*, p. 47.

² "The essence of the truth they [SDA pioneers including EGW] were expressing...was that at the end of the prophetic period of Daniel 8:14, Christ commenced a phase of ministry that was new in kind—and one that had as its goal the final vindication of God's name and honor, the vindication of God's sanctuary and people, and the eternal security of the universe." Adams, *The Sanctuary*, pp. 112, 113.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 69.

In other words, one thing that is delaying the second coming of Christ is that God is waiting for a group of people to prove to the universe that His law can be perfectly kept *by man*. When this is demonstrated before the universe, then Christ will come. Historic Adventists see themselves as this remnant group. This is one of the fundamental dynamics in SDA eschatology. It is against this backdrop that we now evaluate the investigative judgment from the perspective of ethics.

The final judgment is a most solemn event, which must take place before the assembled universe. When God honors His commandment-keeping people, not one of the enemies of truth and righteousness will be absent. And when transgressors receive their condemnation, all the righteous will see the result of sin. God will be honored, and His government *vindicated*; and that in the presence of the inhabitants of the universe. Oh, what a change will then take place in the minds of men! All will then see the value of eternal life.⁴

My personal experience with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment

When I was in the 12th grade in a SDA academy Bible Doctrines class, I rote-learned the Bible references which supposedly taught the investigative judgment and I thought I understood this doctrine. When I took theology at Pacific Union College,⁵ I tried to go through the references in a logical way and I had numerous problems trying to understand the reason for linking the various Bible references together to come to the right conclusion. At the time, I thought the problem was *my* lack of understanding. I tried

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1901-06-18.

⁵ 1965 to 1967.

to be honest with Scripture and the Adventist interpretation of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. It was obvious to me that the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 referred to the time “*while* the transgression causes horror...” I knew that Adventists said this period of time started in 457 B.C. and ended on October 22, 1844. I vividly recall the day I asked one of my professors, in whom I had placed a great deal of confidence, some very pointed questions about some of the problems I was facing in trying to make sense of the investigative judgment. I asked him, “What was trampled⁶ in 457 B.C. that ceased to be trampled in 1844?” I recall his cold stare and answer. “Dale,” he said, “Aren’t you studying for the ministry? You should not be asking questions like that.” I never asked him any more questions—at least not about the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

That same year another professor, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for his honesty, integrity, and mentoring said, “The investigative judgment is not a biblical doctrine and can only be supported by the writings of Ellen White.” This got back to the other professors of the religion department, and they had a small meeting with the theology students to “prove” it could be supported from Scripture. I attended the meeting and could see that the arguments supporting the investigative judgment were full of unwarranted assumptions which required taking texts out of their context and/or reading into the texts things which were not there.

Later, when I was attending the seminary at Andrews University,⁷ I was pleased to see that the outline for the

⁶ The little horn “...grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it *trampled* them down.” (Dan. 8:10).

⁷ Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1967 to 1969.

Atonement Class included a section on 1844. However, the teacher fell behind in the outline and we never got to the section on 1844. Now I think I know why.

My next big encounter with the investigative judgment problem came when Dr. Desmond Ford, who was then teaching in the religion department at Pacific Union College, gave his famous (some would say infamous) talk at the Pacific Union College Adventist Forum.⁸ He, too, said that the investigative judgment could not be supported from Scripture and listed some of the problems. Tapes of his talk were sent around the world and he immediately became the focal point of controversy. The denominational leadership immediately removed him from his teaching position and he was given six months to prepare documentation to prove that his views were in harmony with SDA official teachings.⁹ During this six-month period, Dr. Ford wrote and/or gathered together some 992 pages of material to buttress his case. This became known as “Dr. Ford’s Glacier View Manuscript.”¹⁰ It was *not* to be duplicated and was intended to be used *only* for those people who were to determine Dr. Ford’s future within the SDA church. However, as providence would have it, one person (not Dr. Ford) made a copy. It was copied again and I received that copy. I was a personal friend of Dr. Ford. I respected his integrity and I had also had problems with the doctrine of the cleansing of

⁸ The Adventist Forum was originally designed to be a safe place where educated SDAs who had a masters degree could discuss relevant issues facing the SDA church. Membership is now open to anyone.

⁹ It is my understanding that the General Conference of SDAs did revoke Dr. Ford’s ministerial credentials; however, as church membership is determined by a vote of the local church, Dr. Ford continues to be a member of the Pacific Union College SDA church.

¹⁰ Now this is sold as *Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment*.

the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. Therefore, I determined that it was time for me to get to the bottom of this doctrine. I studied this large document and realized that the problems of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment were much greater than I had realized and there were *no* logical, biblical answers.¹¹

About this same time, I was also sent a set of tapes which were made of a secret meeting between Walter Rea¹² and denominational leaders where he documented the extensive plagiarism he had found in the writings of Ellen White. His evidence was monumental and devastating to my belief in EGW as an inspired writer.

Then, not only had I come to believe the investigative judgment was not a biblical doctrine, but I also realized that I could not trust EGW as an inspired writer for the basis of doctrinal belief. Had not these two events come together at the same time, I doubt if I would have left the SDA church, at least not at that time.

Then I was faced with a real problem. Here I was, a SDA pastor who did not believe in the heart of Adventism. I asked two of my most trusted, ordained pastor friends for three hours of time to present the findings from my Bible study on the topic. At the conclusion they said that it appeared that my findings were correct and the investigative judgment was in error. They counseled me not to make an issue of it. I tried (at first) to follow this counsel.

¹¹ The only answer to the investigative judgment problems is to face the facts and admit that it is a false doctrine without biblical support.

¹² I had known Walter Rea when I was a SDA pastor in southern California, as he pastored a neighboring church. I knew Walter Rea to be an honest scholar and, therefore, I gave considerable weight to his evidence.

In addition to Dr. Ford's manuscript and the tapes by Walter Rea, I also received a tape of Dr. Cottrell's presentation where he made public the secret meetings of the Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel referenced in Chapter 11. I then realized that the denominational scholars and leaders knew of the problems with the investigative judgment and had tried to hide them.

I made the "mistake" of sharing Dr. Cottrell's tape with some of my church elders. It was not long until I had the attention of the conference president and I was called in to account for my disruptive and divisive activities. I asked him for three hours of time so that I could present the results of my Bible study on the subject of the investigative judgment. He promised me that he would give me that time. However, when the time came near, he backed out and had me meet with another conference officer and an ordained pastor who had been at Dr. Ford's Glacier View hearing. This pastor held a Ph.D., and was pastor of a large SDA church. The three of us met for about four hours and the conversation was taped. I was never given a set of the tapes and I am sure that they will never be released. In those four hours in private conversation, both of these men admitted that Daniel 8 referred to Antiochus Epiphanies, the investigative judgment was in error, and they downplayed the authority of EGW. However, not long after that I heard both men strongly support the traditional denomination position in a large public meeting and quote EGW in their talks. I began to question the integrity of denominational leaders.

One day the conference officer, whom I had studied with previously, asked to speak with me. In the course of our conversation he said, "Dale, we both know the doctrine (investigative judgment was implied) is wrong. It is not our fault and we can't do anything about it. We are too old to go

out and find employment outside of the church. Consider the church to be your employer. Do what you can with a clear conscience and don't make any waves."

Another one of my pastor friends was being interviewed to become a conference president. In the interview the union conference president asked him, "Do you believe in 1844?" His answer was, "Sure, don't you?" As he was telling me of this interview, he said in a lowered voice, "Dale, I not only believe in 1844, I also believe in 1981."

Another pastor in the same conference told me that he would tell the conference president whatever he wanted to hear just to keep his job.

I was told by the conference president that I would have to agree to *teach all 27* doctrines as listed in the *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*, or resign. I told him that I could not teach the investigative judgment unless someone, using sound principles of interpretation, could show me *from Scripture* how to do it.

One of the elders in the church, where I was pastoring at the time, said that he knew someone who could answer my questions. This person was a professor in the religion department of one of the SDA universities. He had served on the Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel and, according to the church elder, "had all the answers." My church elder, knowing that my job was on the line, offered to fly me to meet with this SDA scholar. I assured this elder it would be a waste of time because there were no answers. He insisted I go, however, and arranged a lengthy appointment for himself, another church elder, and me to meet with this professor. At this meeting I explained my problem to him and asked that if he had the answers to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment problems, to please give them to me as my job was on the line. At that point, a five hour discussion started and this

professor continually tried to get us off the subject onto what he called “the larger view,” which was, according to him, that one must simply know and trust the character of God.

This five hour conversation was recorded and I have the tapes. I reviewed them recently. This professor on several occasions suggested to me that really all the conference brethren wanted was my loyalty. He suggested that if I would just get my ingathering goal,¹³ keep my baptism count high and let the leaders know I supported the SDA church, all would be well. Then he asked me if there was some way I could carefully select my words so that I could tell the president what he wanted to hear, but at the same time put my own, private interpretation on my statements. In other words, he suggested that I communicate to my conference president in such a way that he would think I agreed with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, and at the same time, I would put a different interpretation on what I said. That would allow me to be “honest” with my disagreement with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment doctrine and yet convey to the conference president my loyalty to the church. For all practical purposes, he asked me to communicate something akin to a falsehood, but he did not say it in those words.

As we were concluding our meeting, he had still not given me any answers. Finally, I broke into the conversation and told him that we had come down to get the answers to the problems of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. I wanted to know the reasoning

¹³ “Ingathering” was a yearly fund raising activity where each church was given a goal. Money was to be raised through donations, usually solicited from the community.

and scriptural support needed to start with Daniel 8:14 and end up at 1844. His only answer was that Ellen White did it and she “thought” she got it from Scripture.

Shortly after this, I was suspended from the ministry. At my hearing before the conference committee, I was expressly told that I could not ask any questions about the biblical interpretation of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. During the discussion, however, one of the lay members of the committee asked a profound question. She said, “I don’t comprehend what is going on here. I understand that all Pastor Ratzlaff wants is for someone to show him how to prove the investigative judgment from the Bible. Here we are in a room full of pastors; why doesn’t someone do it now?” There was a long moment of tense silence, the question was ignored, and the subject was changed.

Finally, the day came when I had to make the decision to either resign or promise to *teach all 27* SDA doctrines. I resigned. Immediately upon my resignation, a conference officer said to me, “Dale, your main problem is you are too honest.” When I got back to my church, I shared this conversation with my church elders. In a subsequent meeting with these elders, this conference official denied having told me that my main problem was I was too honest.

The ethics of the investigative judgment

Doubtless, some will conclude that I am relating these things just to justify my own actions. This is not my intent. I am not bitter over leaving the SDA church. In fact, my wife and I frequently remark to each other how thankful we are to be out of the SDA church. To have the freedom to study Scripture and take it for what it says, without trying to make it say something else, is refreshing. Carolyn and I felt

that belonging to, and supporting, the SDA church would be to participate in its doctrinal errors and unethical practices.

Many others have left the SDA church over the same issues. Dr. Ford's list of Seventh-day Adventists who have had problems with the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment takes up seventy-five pages.¹⁴ To this list we should add another approximately two hundred SDA workers who have left denominational employment since Dr. Ford wrote his book. Rather than castigate all those who leave, which has been the church's historical way of dealing with investigative judgment problems,¹⁵ the SDA church needs to squarely face the fact that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is wrong. Rather than being the means to vindicate the justice of God through the character development of His remnant people, as they claim it to be, it has proven to be nothing more than a breeding ground for all sorts of questionable maneuvering—some would say dishonesty. It has been thoroughly documented that denominational leaders have known about the problems associated with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.¹⁶ But they have done nothing to remove this "sliver." Is it too much to hope that someday the SDA church will officially face the facts and cut itself free from this encumbering "sliver"?

¹⁴ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, pp. 25–100.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, the chapter, "History of Sanctuary Problems in Seventh-day Adventist Church and Recognition of these Problems by Adventist Writers." pp. 11–100.

This chapter will be concluded with a summary of the evidence brought out thus far in our study—evidence that relates to ethics.

Summary of SDA Sanctuary Ethics

1. It is clear that the early visions of EGW presented gross, doctrinal error.
2. The early visions of EGW are filled with authoritative statements claiming divine origin. Her published writings contain over 970 “I was shown” statements and over 260 “said the angel” statements. Many, certainly not all, of these are associated with the gross, doctrinal error as mentioned above.
3. It is clear that Adventists knew of these problems, and at least some of the errors, in the writings of EGW.
4. It is clear that EGW knew of the doctrinal problems in her own writings, but never admitted her error.
5. EGW acknowledged some of the errors of “early Adventists,” but never admitted that many of these early errors were founded or supported by her “visions from God.”
6. The change of EGW’s first vision¹⁷ was a purposeful, doctrinal, major change. It was denied, and yet was “made under the author’s own eye, and with her full approval.”¹⁸
7. The SDA church has *reinterpreted* “truth” on numerous occasions, even if the reinterpretation was *contrary* to the first interpretation. Seldom, if ever, has the first interpretation been renounced as error.

¹⁷ See Chapter 8, “Change the Vision.”

¹⁸ See Preface to *Early Writings*.

8. The SDA church has *redefined* the terms of their erroneous doctrines, such as the shut door, to avoid admitting previous doctrinal error.
9. Ellen White, using her “divine authority,” through her “testimonies,” undermined and ostracized those who disagreed with her point of view. Often the issue appeared to be some stance on truth or error, when in reality the issue was over who had the power.¹⁹ Those who did not accept her testimonies were told they would end up in destruction.²⁰
10. SDA denominational leaders formed the Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel, which was composed of the best minds within Adventism, and gave this committee the assignment to find contextual support for the investigative judgment. This committee met for five full years and then left no minutes. Some—certainly not all—of these people continued to promote the traditional investigative judgment to the laity of the SDA church as if there were no problems.
11. My own experience with SDA denominational leaders has shown me that many—certainly not all—of them seem to be more concerned with keeping the status quo than with truth. While I have not mentioned the experience of other pastors who left the SDA church about the same time as I did,²¹ those whom I know had similar experiences.

¹⁹ For example, EGW’s attack against Kellogg, an early SDA physician who was head of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, was based upon his supposed pantheism, when in reality, the real issue was that Kellogg was gaining more power than she or her husband had.

²⁰ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 221; Vol. 5, pp. 19, 682.

²¹ It is my understanding that several hundred pastors left the SDA church in the nineteen eighties. I was told by one reliable source that

12. Could it be that something is ethically wrong at the heart of Adventism? Could it be that the tactics necessary to continually deal with the false doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, and the theological baggage that comes with this doctrine, are bearing bad fruit? Could it be that this doctrine, which claims to develop a special, holy, remnant that will reflect the image of Jesus fully, has actually contributed to some questionable ethical practices?

there were over 180 “workers” who left in the Pacific Union Conference alone. I know several SDA pastors who are in the process of leaving at the time of this writing.

Chapter 15



I've Been Acquitted!

The Good News of Judgment

The good news of the judgment is that Christ has taken our place. He was judged a sinner on the cross. There, He paid the price for *all* sin—yours, mine, past, present, future—once and for all! There at the cross a gracious transfer took place that has forever changed the relationship between man and God. Our sins were laid upon Christ and forever judged. His righteousness was accredited to our account. *This* is the gospel which gripped and transformed the lives of the apostles. *This* is the gospel that is to be proclaimed to all the world.

There are three aspects of judgment. First, there is the cross—the Christ event—the historical occurrence of the righteous life of Jesus, His death, His burial, His glorious resurrection, and His ascension to God’s right hand. Second, there is our response to the Christ event. When the gospel is proclaimed to us, we must respond. We are truly judged by the gospel. Third, when Christ comes the second time He will reveal the results of His choosing us and of our choosing Him. Those who respond to His gracious offer of salvation, the ones chosen “in Christ” before the foundation of the world, will be ushered into the blessings of eternity with God. Those who have rejected the free gift of salvation will be assigned to the lake of fire. Let us consider each of these three aspects of judgment.

Judgment in Christ

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed (Isa. 53:4–5).

Isaiah has been called “the gospel prophet,” and for good reason. Matthew could direct His Jewish readers to the Old Testament and there find many types and shadows of the coming Messiah which found their complete fulfillment in the Christ event.

Shortly before Christ became man, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and concerning Mary he said:

And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins (Mt. 1:21).

When John the Baptist introduced Jesus at the Jordan he said:

Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
(Jn. 1:29).

Throughout the ministry of Jesus we see Him steadily, with determination and forethought, moving toward the cross—the judgment of the world.

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Mt. 20:28).

From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day (Mt. 16:21).

Now *judgment* is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out (Jn. 12:31).

Jesus, knowing full well what lay ahead of him and the full meaning of his sacrificial death, on the night before He was betrayed said:

“I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”...And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves.”...And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Lk. 22:15–22).

Later that same night, Jesus, looking forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit, said these insightful words about judgment and righteousness:

And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning

judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged (Jn. 16:8–11).

These are highly significant words in connection with our study. Notice that after the death of Christ, sin is defined as *not believing* in Jesus. Righteousness is in *the person of Jesus Christ* who is at the Father's right hand. Judgment deals with Satan who *has been* judged.

The message of the early church was:

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21.)

Judged by the gospel

The Bible teaches that:

...He *chose us in Him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love *He predestined us* to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace* (Eph. 1:4–7).

Scripture also teaches that *we* must *respond* to God's gracious offer in Christ.

But as many as *received Him*, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who *believe* in His name (Jn. 1:12).

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whoever believes* in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. *He who believes in Him is not judged*; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And *this is the judgment*, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil (Jn. 3:16–19).

Notice that believing and judgment are related. He who believes is *not* judged. Judgment is set forth in the context of one's choice when confronted with the light of the gospel of Christ. This, too, is of vital importance to our study. We begin to see that the biblical concept of judgment is diametrically opposed to the traditional SDA investigative judgment.

A little later in John's gospel Jesus says:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and *believes* Him who sent Me, *has* eternal life, and *does not come into judgment*, but has passed out of death into life (Jn. 5:24).

This is the judgment of justification. It takes the reality of the *past* historical event of Christ's substitutionary life and death, which provides the righteousness needed for us to pass in the coming *future* judgment day of God, and applies complete forgiveness of sin *and* imputed righteousness to the *present* experience of the believer. Therefore, Paul could say that *we* died with Christ.¹ *We* were raised with him to newness of life and *we* are *already* seated with Christ in heavenly places.²

¹ "How shall *we* who *died* to sin still live in it?" (Rom. 6:2). "For he who has died is freed from sin. Now if *we* have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." (Rom. 6:7-8). "But now *we* have been released from the Law, *having died* to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter." (Rom. 7:6). "If *you have died* with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees...." (Col. 2:20). "For *you have died* and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3). "It is a trustworthy statement: For if *we died with Him*, we shall also live with Him." (2 Tim. 2:11).

² "And *raised us up with Him*, and seated *us* with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:6). "Having been buried *with Him* in baptism, in which *you were also raised up with Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Col. 2:12). "If then

In other words, the truth of justification by faith is that the verdict of “not guilty” has *already been given* to those who believe! And that is the good news of the gospel! And that is why true believers do not “come into judgment,” because they have *already* been judged “in Christ.”

...Giving thanks to the Father, who *has qualified* us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He *delivered* us from the domain of darkness, and *transferred* us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we *have* redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:12–14).

The focus of the investigative judgment is on personal deeds in order that one might be found worthy of eternal life. The good news of the gospel is that *the Father* has *already* qualified us, who believe in Christ, to share in the eternal inheritance in Christ. We have *already* been delivered from the domain of darkness. We *now* have redemption.

The vindication of God’s justice in the way he saves *helpless, ungodly sinners* who were *enemies* of God³ has *already* been settled.

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” (Col. 3:1).

³ “For while we were still *helpless*, at the right time Christ died for the *ungodly*. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if *while we were enemies*, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be *saved by His life*. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have *now* received the reconciliation.” (Rom. 5:6–11).

even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ *for all those who believe*; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was to demonstrate His righteousness*, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, *that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus* (Rom. 3:21–26).

Adventists look to the future for the vindication of God when the “remnant” will fully reflect the image of Jesus. The Bible, however, states that the blood of Christ vindicated God’s character, and this was done by Christ without any help from some last-day remnant people.

Notice that all this takes place “*apart from law*” or outside the realm of old covenant law.⁴ In the new covenant, the focus is not on *law*, but on *belief* in Christ. Our complete justification is *apart from* works of the Law.⁵ Our salvation is not dependent upon our good works, but upon God’s mercy.

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, *not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness*, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Ti. 3:4–7).

Those who hear and then reject the gospel are judged as unworthy of eternal life.

⁴ See Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ*, pp. 293–300 for a more complete discussion of this topic.

⁵ “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith *apart from* works of the Law.” (Rom. 3:28).

You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and *you are unwilling to come to Me*, that you may have life (Jn. 5:39–40).

And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind.” Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains” (Jn. 9:39–41).

We see, then, that men are judged by their response to the good news of the gospel. The light of the mercy of God has been brightly revealed in Christ. Now, the darkness of sin has no excuse.

The second coming⁶ of Christ reveals God’s judgment

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2:5).

The above text implies that the verdict of judgment has already been given. In that sense, it could be said to be a pre-advent judgment. However, this pre-advent judgment is not some investigative judgment where Jesus and the onlooking universe are pouring over the record books of heaven, measuring character to see who is worthy of eternal life. Rather, this judgment results from one’s response to the gospel *when* it has been proclaimed, understood, and received or rejected. This last judgment simply reveals who

⁶ It is not my intent to be any more precise about the revelation of God’s judgment than just “the second coming.” This may be interpreted differently by different people. I choose to not be too dogmatic regarding last day-events.

by *faith* accepted God's free gift of eternal life and who did not.

...that the proof of your *faith*, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the *revelation* of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:7).

Chapter Summary

1. Jesus, as our substitute, was judged in our place on the cross. He has paid the price for all sin for all time. He has also provided perfect righteousness which can be credited to our account. By His death on the cross, Jesus judged Satan and demonstrated God's justice in the way God saves sinners.
2. The good news of the judgment is that all who believe and trust in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ can say with assurance, "I've been acquitted!" We have *already* been judged in Christ. Those who reject the gospel, judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.
3. The second coming of Christ will be a revelation of how men responded to God's gracious gift of salvation.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does *not* come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (Jn. 5:24).

No man can
lay a
foundation
other than
the one
which is laid,
which is
Jesus Christ

Chapter 16



The Central Pillar

The Heart of SDA Theology

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is indeed “the foundation and central pillar of Adventism.”¹ While some SDAs would not agree with this statement, we will see that nearly every aspect of their unique message is tied to this central pillar, without which the other SDA doctrines

¹ “The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’ Daniel 8:14.” Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 409.

and emphases would lose some, if not much, of their significance.

The doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is linked to the following key aspects of the SDA message.

The three angels' messages

For all Adventists, the three angels' messages hold singular significance. While most Evangelical Adventists would question the importance of 1844, few would diminish the centrality of the three angels' messages.²

Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come (Rev. 14:6).

From its very inception this has been the keynote of Adventism. Adventists believe this judgment is the investigative judgment which started in 1844.

Point number 12 in the *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs* supports this.

This remnant announces *the arrival of the judgment hour*, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. *This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven* and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness.³

² From personal conversations with Evangelical Adventist pastors, it is evident that at least some of them do not interpret Rev. 14:6–12 in the traditional Adventist way.

³ See also the chapter “The Third Angel’s Message,” in *Early Writings*, pp. 254–258.

The SDA seventh-day Sabbath message

A Historical Link

Early Adventists reinterpreted Miller's 1844 message to apply to the "event" of the change of the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Shortly after this, Ellen White was given a vision of the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary and was shown that the people of God were to be tested on the basis of their obedience to the Ten Commandments in general, and the Sabbath in particular.

After Jesus opened the door of the Most Holy the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were to be *tested and proved*, as God proved the children of Israel anciently, to see if they would keep his law.⁴

Here we find that it was through their interpretation of the sanctuary "truth" that early Adventists suddenly came to believe that God would judge them on the basis of the Ten Commandments.⁵

A Theological Link

Ellen White anchored this *historical link* as an immovable pillar of SDA theology through her visions.

But the Lord gave me a view of the heavenly sanctuary. The temple of God was opened in heaven, and I was shown the ark of God covered with the mercy seat. Two angels stood, one at each end of the ark, with their wings spread over the mercy seat, and their faces turned toward it. My accompanying angel informed me that these represented all the heavenly host looking with reverential awe toward the holy law which had been written by the finger of God. Jesus raised the cover of the ark, and I

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 164.

⁵ The Sabbath "truth" was introduced to Adventists by Joseph Bates. However, like the investigative judgment, it was cemented into Adventist theology by the visions of EGW.

beheld the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. I was amazed as *I saw the fourth commandment in the very center of the ten precepts, with a soft halo of light encircling it*. Said the angel: "It is the only one of the ten which defines the living God who created the heavens and the earth and all things that are therein. When the foundations of the earth were laid, then was laid the foundation of the Sabbath also."⁶

In the two quotations above, Ellen White links the SDA *sanctuary message to the Sabbath and the investigative judgment*. She states that *the people of God* are to be *tested and proved* on the basis of the Ten Commandments. Then she shows that the Sabbath commandment is the most important of the ten.

The Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it.⁷

In the writings of Ellen White we find that she speaks about this "halo" of light or glory around the Sabbath commandment at least eight times.⁸

The seal of God and the mark of the beast⁹

Revelation 14:6–12 has been linked to the 1844 movement from the early days of Adventism.¹⁰ This link, how-

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p: 76.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 32

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 75; *Early Writings*, pp. 32, 255; *Life Sketches*, pp. 96, 100; *Review and Herald*, 1851-7-21; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 164; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, p. 82.

⁹ For Adventists the seal of God is the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, and the mark of the beast is Sunday worship. They believe the mark of the beast will not be given, however, until there is a Sunday law requiring Sunday worship.

¹⁰ See *The Present Truth*, April, 1850. See Knight, *Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism*, pp. 186–190.

ever, is not a valid link unless one accepts Adventist theology.

As we have seen, most early Adventist theology was developed using a careless, proof-text method of interpretation. There is abundant evidence, as has been shown in previous chapters, that the “cleansing” of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 has nothing to do with the “cleansing” of the sanctuary in Leviticus 16. It has nothing to do with 1844. It has nothing to do with the ministry of Christ in heaven recorded in the book of Hebrews. We have also seen that the “judgment hour” messages of Revelation 14 have nothing to do with 1844 or the righteous, but are a last-day warning to the wicked. Adventists, however, building on 1844 theology, continue to promote the “truth” of the judgment hour of Revelation 14 as dealing only with the righteous, when in reality it is a warning to the *wicked* who are about to receive the mark of the beast. Therefore, there really is no *biblical* link between the investigative judgment and the seal of God and the mark of the beast. However, *for Adventists*, the investigative judgment *is* the connecting link to their message on the mark of the beast, which in turn is *for them* linked to the Sabbath.

The SDA concept of remnant

As the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment were cemented into Adventist theology by the visions of EGW, so also are 1844, the investigative judgment, and the three angels’ messages glued together by the “prophetic” ministry of Ellen White. This tightly-glued-together package is the holder for SDA remnant theology. This is also made clear in point No. 12 of *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*.

This *remnant* announces the arrival of the *judgment hour*, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of *judgment in heaven*.

The health message of SDAs

Ellen White on numerous occasions linked the SDA health¹¹ message with the work of the third angel's message, which in turn is the "judgment-hour message."

The health reform, I was shown, is a part of the third angel's message and is just as closely connected with it as are the arm and hand with the human body.¹²

The health reform is an important part of the third angel's message; and as a people professing this reform, we should not retrograde, but make continual advancement.¹³

The imminent second coming of Christ

This is the very foundation of Adventism. It was the second advent of Christ which Miller predicted. The SDA church was born in the context of the soon coming of Christ and has, throughout *all* of its history, held this as part of its special message.

Point No. 24 in *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs* not only states that Christ's coming is near, but links this belief to the fulfillment of "most lines of prophecy" and lists Revela-

¹¹ SDAs have a strong emphasis on healthful living. The principles they espouse are generally good. However, using the writings of Ellen White, they have sometimes made their health message almost meritorious. "The light God has given on *health reform is for our salvation and the salvation of the world*." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, p. 136.

¹² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 486.

¹³ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 184-07-29.

tion. 14:14–20, which immediately follows the three angels' messages, as one of the supporting Scriptures.

The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent.¹⁴

For Adventists the second coming is the next event following the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

Thus those who followed in the advancing light of the prophetic word saw that instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, into the presence of God, to perform the closing work of atonement, *preparatory to his coming*.¹⁵

The evangelistic mission of the SDA church

The evangelistic mission of SDAs has, since its very beginning,¹⁶ been associated with the three angel's messages which in turn is inseparably linked with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

Everything in the universe calls upon those who know the truth to consecrate themselves unreservedly to the proclamation of the truth as it has been made known to them in the third angel's message. That which we see and hear calls us to our duty. The working of satanic agencies calls every Christian to stand in his lot.¹⁷

The third angel's message *is the gospel message for these last days*, and in no case is it to be overshadowed by other interests and made to appear an unessential consideration. When

¹⁴ "The Second Coming of Christ," in *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*, No. 24.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266.

¹⁶ That is, after 1851, when the door of mercy was opened again.

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 25.

in our institutions anything is placed above the third angel's message, the gospel is not there the great leading power.¹⁸

The Lord designs that the proclamation of the third angel's message shall be the highest, greatest work carried on in our world at this time.¹⁹

When Ellen White refers to the "third angel's message," she usually includes the first and second angels' messages with them. Under the title "Our Message," EGW says:

The third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels, is the message for this time. We are to raise aloft the banner on which is inscribed: "The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." The world is soon to meet the great Lawgiver over His broken law. This is not the time to put out of sight the great issues before us. God calls upon His people to magnify the law and make it honorable.^{20,21}

Conclusion

We see that the 1844 cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment message is, indeed, the heart of Adventist theology. This is not only evidenced by the EGW quotations cited above, but can be seen by the title of a recent book by Roy Adams, associate editor of the *Adventist Review*.²² It is entitled *The Sanctuary: Under-*

¹⁸ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 241.

¹⁹ Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 180.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 197.

²¹ EGW later stated that the third angel's message was justification by faith. "Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'" *Review and Herald*, 1890-4-1.

²² The *Adventist Review* is the official organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

*standing the Heart of Adventist Theology.*²³ Could this explain *why* denominational leaders, who should know there is no biblical base for this doctrine, have apparently been so reluctant to discard this “truth”? It is intertwined so tightly with the other “unique” aspects of Adventism that to cut out the “sliver” of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment would require the removal of, or the painful separation from, a mass of connected, theological tissue. Or, to change the metaphor, the removal of this central pillar might cause the catastrophic crumbling of Historic Adventism.²⁴

Chapter Summary

The doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is linked to the following:

1. The SDA Sabbath message.
2. The “three angels’ messages.”
3. The “seal of God” and the “mark of the beast.”
4. The SDA concept of remnant.
5. The SDA health reform message.

²³ Roy Adams, *The Sanctuary: Understanding the Heart of Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1993).

²⁴ Several Adventist pastors, as well as several ex-Adventist pastors, who read the first draft of this book said that if the SDA church cut out this doctrine it would be devastating to Historic Adventism.

6. The imminent second coming of Christ.
7. The evangelistic mission of the SDA church.
8. The glue that links all these SDA messages together is the prophetic ministry and visions of Ellen White.

Chapter 17



The Marks of a Cult—

Does the SDA Church Have Them?

In this chapter we will: (1) list typical identifying marks of a “Christian” cult, (2) compare the SDA church¹ to these characteristics, and (3) draw some preliminary conclusions.

¹ This chapter is directed largely toward Historic Adventism as taught in the current *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs* and the writings of Ellen White.

Cult Characteristics

What are the characteristics or identifying marks of a cult? A number have been suggested and there is probably no universal definition that all would accept.² The following fifteen characteristics have been listed as marks which apply to most “Christian” cults.^{3,4}

1. *Claim to extra-biblical revelation*: “We have a special message from God.”
2. *Exclusive salvation*: “We alone are saved. All others are lost.”
3. *Persecution complex*: “The world is against us because we have the truth.”
4. *Defective Christology*: “Jesus died for our sins, but...”
5. *Doctrinal ambiguity*: “The truth doesn’t have to make sense.”
6. *Presumptuous leadership*: “I know what is best for you.”
7. *Segmented interpretation of the Bible*: “These verses are more important.”
8. *Denunciation of other Christians*: “All the churches are wrong but ours.”
9. *Limited eschatology*: “Jesus is coming only for us.”
10. *Messianic complex*: “We are God’s only hope to save the world.”
11. *Denial of the triune nature of God*.

² “There is no definition of cult that is universally accepted by sociologists and psychologists of religion. The term cult is popularly applied to groups characterized by some kind of faddish devotion to a person or practice that is significantly apart from the cultural mainstream.” Richard J. Bord, “Cults,” in the *Academic American Encyclopedia*.

³ Some would say that groups which have these characteristics are non-Christian.

⁴ This list of fifteen cult characteristics is drawn from several lists. It is a combination of Ed Hindson’s list, “The Cultic Mentality, Marks of Religious Cults,” in *Fundamentalist Journal*, Oct., 1995 and a list of cult characteristics from a personal letter from Kenneth Samples, Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Augustine Fellowship Study Center, Hemet, California.

12. *Denial of the deity of Christ.*
13. *Denial of the personality of the Holy Spirit.*
14. *Denial of Christ's bodily resurrection.*
15. *Denial of justification by faith.*

We will now compare the SDA church teachings to these marks of a cult to see if they meet this criterion. The first section indicates which characteristics the SDA church does meet, and the second section shows which ones they do not meet.

Does Adventism meet these cult characteristics?

1. *Claim to extra-biblical revelation:* “We have a special message from God.”

That Historic Adventism meets this qualification is beyond the shadow of any doubt whatsoever. The writings of Ellen G. White constitute the extra-biblical revelation for SDAs.⁵ The Adventist church has throughout most, if not all, of its history claimed to be the “remnant church” of Bible prophecy. One of the supporting claims for this is that God has restored through the ministry of Ellen G. White the “testimony of Jesus” or “spirit of prophecy.”⁶ The history of the SDA church is inextricably linked to the history of EGW;⁷ the two cannot be separated. The unique aspects of

⁵ Some Evangelical Adventists reject the writings of EGW as a source of authority.

⁶ “But God in his goodness has once again caused the ‘testimony of Christ’ to be confirmed in his church, so that we ‘come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor 16, 7). His last day remnant people have had restored through the ministry of Ellen G. White, ‘the testimony of Jesus’ which is ‘the spirit of prophecy’ (Rev 12:17; 19:10).” Taken from the introduction to *The Study Bible*.

⁷ Look in any SDA denominational history book or examine any course outline on SDA history and you will find that a significant portion of it will be dedicated to the life and ministry of Ellen White. No matter

SDA theology are dependent upon the writings of Ellen White.⁸ The current official doctrinal statement of the SDA church supports this first qualification of a cult.⁹

2. *Exclusive salvation: “We alone are saved. All others are lost.”*

Few pastors and even fewer scholars in the SDA church today would say that SDAs will be the only ones saved. However, it is equally true that most of the early Adventists believed that they were the only ones living in the favor of God.¹⁰ This fact has already been documented in this book. For example, the early teaching that the door of mercy was shut for all those who had not accepted the prophetic message of the three angels is a case in point. However, official SDA church doctrine and the published writings of Ellen White *continue* to teach exclusive salvation for Seventh-day Adventists. Many Historic Adventists still

what one thinks of Ellen White, she has forever made her mark on the SDA church.

⁸ Some would question this and say that all of the SDA doctrines can be proved from the Bible and the Bible alone. The evidence already presented in this book should be sufficient to prove otherwise. Many pastors (probably hundreds) and church members (probably thousands) have left the SDA church for the specific reason that they came to realize that one or more of the SDA doctrinal statements could not be supported from the Bible and the Bible alone.

⁹ “One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are *a continuing and authoritative source of truth* which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.” No. 17, *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*.

¹⁰ I do not use the word “saved” here because SDAs are taught never to say they are saved.

believe that in the *last days* there will only be two camps: true Seventh-day Sabbath keepers who will be saved and those who worship on Sunday, receive the mark of the beast, and will be lost.¹¹ In the *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs* number 12, “The Remnant and Its Mission,” we read about an exclusive group “in the last days”—meaning the SDA church.

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, *but* in the last days, a time of *widespread apostasy*, a remnant has been *called out* to keep the *commandments of God* and *the faith of Jesus*. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a *work of repentance* and reform on earth. *Every believer* is called to have a personal part in *this* worldwide witness.

A careful reading of the above statement will show it teaches that SDAs will be the only people saved “in the last days.” Note the following: It states that the universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, “but,” in contrast to the former statement, in the last days (since 1844) a remnant has been “*called out*.” This remnant is called out *from the other churches*. It speaks of a “time of widespread apostasy.” In the context of SDA teaching this apostasy means belief in the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness.¹² When this statement says the remnant

¹¹ This is what I once believed and was taught in SDA schools.

¹² “Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country

are called out to “keep the commandments of God” it means the Ten Commandments in general, and the fourth commandment in particular. Ellen White taught that the Sabbath would be the test of loyalty for all of God’s true people in the last days.¹³ She clearly believed and taught that *no person* who did not keep the Sabbath in the last days would be saved.^{14,15} In fact she stated that those who

will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.” Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 588. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 405.

¹³ “The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then *the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not*. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God’s law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.” Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

¹⁴ “*God will never, never allow any man to pass through the pearly gates of the city of God who does not bear the signet of the faithful, His government mark* [in context the signet and mark is the Sabbath] *Every soul who is saved will cherish pure principles, which proceed from the very essence of truth. He must fasten himself by golden links to the everlasting power and love of the God of truth. He must be loyal to the principles of God’s word, loyal to the everlasting covenant which is a sign between man and his Maker.*” Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry*, p. 123.

¹⁵ Ellen White did allow for the salvation of those who had not kept the seventh-day Sabbath prior to 1844. At that time, however, she said the seventh-day Sabbath became a test for God’s people. “Those who died before the light was given upon the law of God and the claims of the fourth commandment were not guilty of the sin of violating the seventh-day Sabbath.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 693.

broke the Sabbath should be disfellowshipped from the remnant church.¹⁶ That the SDA church *officially* continues to support the doctrine that only SDAs (perhaps a few other seventh-day Sabbath keepers as well) will be saved can be seen from *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs* number 19, “The Sabbath.”

The fourth commandment of God’s unchangeable law *requires the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath* as the day of rest, worship and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, *a token of our allegiance*, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God’s kingdom. *The Sabbath is God’s perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people.*

Next, we note that the doctrinal statement on the Remnant quoted previously maintains that “*Every believer* is called to have a personal part in *this* worldwide witness.” In other words *every believer* (please note the *inclusiveness*) will participate in *this* (please note the *exclusiveness*) world-wide witness. In other words every believer will be involved in the SDA mission.

I encourage those who doubt that exclusive salvation is, indeed, the official teaching of the SDA church to read the chapters, “The Loud Cry,” “The Time of Trouble” and

¹⁶ “Let the Spirit of God fashion our character and our work. We are responsible for the manner in which the truth is presented. We should seek to impress unbelievers with its exalted character. Christ is soon coming, and those who have not kept the Sabbath sacredly should reform. *God will frown upon those who disregard his commandments, and he cannot bless the church that retains Sabbath-breakers in its fellowship.*” Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 1890-06-02.

“God’s People Delivered” in *The Spirit of Prophecy* or *The Great Controversy*.¹⁷

Historic Adventism, as well as the official teachings of the church, hold that in the last days, only Seventh-day Adventists will be saved.^{18,19} We see, then, that the SDA church meets the second characteristic of a cult.

3. Persecution complex: “The world is against us because we have the truth.”²⁰

We have already documented this mentality in the events following 1844. However, a persecution complex is a *major* emphasis in the eschatology of SDAs. Here, SDAs are not too far removed from David Koresh.²¹

¹⁷ *The Spirit of Prophecy* series is an earlier presentation of the “great controversy between Christ and Satan” while the *Conflict of the Ages* series is a revised, enlarged edition of the same subject matter. *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, contains much of the same material as *The Great Controversy*, which is Volume 5 of the *Conflict of the Ages* series.

¹⁸ A possible exception would be other Christian groups who keep the seventh-day Sabbath. According to Historic SDAs, other Sabbathkeeping groups would not be considered part of God’s *true* “remnant” as they would not have the other identifying mark of the remnant—the prophetic ministry of Ellen White.

¹⁹ Evangelical Adventists do not hold to the SDA doctrine of the remnant or exclusive salvation for SDAs.

²⁰ It should be noted that while this is a common characteristic of a “Christian” cult, it is a scriptural truth that those who live godly may suffer persecution. However, Christians are not to have a “persecution complex.”

²¹ It has been well established that David Koresh was an offshoot from the SDA church. Nearly all of his disciples were former Seventh-day Adventists. They accepted the writings of Ellen White and also had a strong persecution complex. See *The Watchman Expositor*, Vol. II, No. 4, 1994, which documents the close links between the SDA church and David Koresh. See also James D. Taboe and Eugene V. Gallagher, *Why Waco?* pp. 23–79.

Seventh-day Adventism, from its infancy, has taught that in the last days the Sabbath will be the mark of loyalty between the true followers of God and those who receive the mark of the beast. They believe that the United States will be foremost in uniting with Papal power and spiritualism and then, under the influence of this three-fold union, a national and universal Sunday law will be enacted. The time will come, according to their teachings, when the death penalty will be enacted against those who continue to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. This test, says Ellen White, will take place when Christ has finished his atonement in the heavenly sanctuary and the righteous (SDAs) will be living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor.

From my own experience in the SDA church and from ministering to many former SDAs I can safely say that this “impending conflict” and “time of trouble” has caused untold harm, fear and anxiety. Note the impact of some of these statements.

When he leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God *without an intercessor*. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and *Satan has entire control* of the finally impenitent. The power attending the last warning has enraged them, and *their anger is kindled against all who have received the message*. The people of God are then plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob’s trouble.²²

It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. *The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.*²³

²² Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 432.

²³ Can you imagine the anxiety this statement can produce in the mind of someone who does not have the assurance of salvation, especially as

And now, while the precious Saviour is making an atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ.²⁴

In the last conflict the Sabbath will be the special point of controversy throughout all Christendom. Secular rulers and religious leaders will unite to enforce the observance of the Sunday; and as milder measures fail, *the most oppressive laws will be enacted*. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the land ought not to be tolerated, and *a decree will finally be issued denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment, and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death*. Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honor the divine precepts.

The people of God will then *flee from the cities and villages, and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places*. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains.²⁵

I saw a writing, and copies of it scattered in different parts of the land, giving orders, that unless the saints should yield their peculiar faith, give up the Sabbath, and observe the first day, they were at liberty, after such a time, to put them to death.²⁶

These quotations could be multiplied. They point out that SDAs do have a persecution complex and that is because they believe they have the "truth."²⁷ The Seventh-day Adventist church meets the third characteristic of a cult.

it begins to snowball in the imagination? No matter how terrible the imagination might picture it, it will be even worse.

²⁴ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 440.

²⁵ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 444.

²⁶ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 201.

²⁷ "It is because the saints are keeping all ten of the commandments that the dragon makes war upon them. If they will lower the standard and yield the peculiarities of their faith, the dragon will be at peace; but they excite his ire because they have dared to raise the standard and unfurl their banner in *opposition to the Protestant world*, who are worshipping

4. Defective Christology: “Jesus died for our sins, but...”

This statement seems to address both Christology and Soteriology.²⁸ Within the SDA church there are several streams of theology. This is especially true when it comes to Christology. Historic Adventism stresses the idea that Christ came to give His people a second probation^{29,30} in which to prove their loyalty and obedience.³¹ Christ’s holy

the institution of papacy.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 223.

²⁸ Christology deals with the doctrine of the person of Christ. Soteriology is a study of the way men are saved.

²⁹ “Infinite wisdom devised the plan of redemption, which places the race on a *second probation* by giving them another trial.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 484. “Adam’s sin plunged the race into hopeless misery; but by the sacrifice of the Son of God, a *second probation* was granted to man.” Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 15.

³⁰ As pointed out in the above footnote, EGW sees this second probation available for all mankind.

³¹ “In his human nature Christ rendered perfect obedience to the law of God, thus *proving to all that this law can be kept*. He endured the death penalty himself, not to abrogate the law, not to immortalize sin, but to take away sin. It is because he has borne the punishment that man can have a *second probation*. He may, if he will, return to his loyalty. But if he refuses to obey the commands of God, if he rejects the warnings and messages God sends, choosing rather to echo the words of the deceiver, he is willingly ignorant, and the condemnation of God is upon him. He chooses disobedience because obedience means lifting the cross, and practicing self-denial.” Ellen G. White, *Southern Watchman*, 1908-02-04. “Christ died for a ruined world, and through the merit of Christ, God has elected that man should have a second trial, a *second probation*, a second test *as to whether he will keep the commandments of God*, or walk in the path of transgression, as did Adam.” Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1897-09-28.

life is seen as an *example* of how humanity combined with the power of the Holy Spirit could perfectly keep the law.³²

The Lord now requires of his church *perfect obedience* to all his commandments. *He will not accept less* than his due. Man may receive grace and truth to obey all his commandments, which are reasonable and just. *All his righteous demands must be fully met*; for this *second probation* granted to the fallen race cost an infinite price, even the life of the Son of God.³³

The substitutionary aspect of the atonement is downplayed and the exemplary aspect is emphasized. Character development and overcoming are two themes stressed in Historic Adventism. For this group, it is important that Christ have a weakened, sinful nature like all the rest of the sons of Adam. Note how Ellen White supports this idea.

The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” Rom. 11:33. We marvel at the Saviour’s sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. *Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity.* What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. *He came with such a heredity to*

³² “Christ, by his own example, made it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. *Divinity and humanity may be combined in them.*” Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1890-02-18.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1898-09-13.

share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, *subject to the weakness of humanity*. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, *to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss.*³⁴

Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those he wished to save. In him was no guile or sinfulness; he was ever pure and undefiled; *yet he took upon him our sinful nature....* He led them to see that if they repented, if their characters were transformed after the divine similitude, they would win immortality.³⁵

Think of Christ's humiliation. *He took upon himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin.* He took our sorrows, bearing our grief and shame. He endured all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. He united himself with the temple. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," because by so doing he could associate with the sinful, sorrowing sons and daughters of Adam.³⁶

These statements make it clear that Ellen White did teach the sinful humanity of Christ. Historic Adventists often quote the above references to prove this. It should also be noted that some early Adventists, such as Uriah Smith, were Arian³⁷ in their Christology. There are other statements in the writings of EGW, however, where she clearly teaches a sinless, but weakened nature of Christ.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 48.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1896-12-15.

³⁶ Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, 1900-12-20.

³⁷ This view teaches that Christ was a created being.

He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions.³⁸

When Christ bowed his head and died, he bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with him to the earth. *He vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan obtained the victory.* The enemy was overcome by Christ in his human nature. The power of the Saviour's Godhead was hidden. He overcame in human nature, relying upon God for power. *This is the privilege of all.* In proportion to our faith will be our victory.³⁹

Of interest at this point is a comment made in a paper by Hermon Bauman.⁴⁰

Though the Bible seems clear regarding Jesus' sinlessness we do tend to get into trouble when dealing with the rather large number of quotations from the writings of Ellen White.⁴¹

As one anonymous reviewer of the first draft of this book noted, what Ellen White affirms on one hand, she denies on the other. It is clear that her Christology and Soteriology fit together.⁴² If the work of Christ is seen primarily in terms of *example*,⁴³ as shown in some of the

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 202.

³⁹ Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, 1901-04-25.

⁴⁰ Hermon Bauman is (at the time of this writing) president of the Arizona Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

⁴¹ Hermon Bauman, "Jesus' Human Nature: Sinless or Sinful?" p. 5.

⁴² In her early writings EGW seems to lean more toward the sinful nature of Christ and also promotes a faith plus works salvation. In her later writings there seems to be more of an emphasis on the sinless nature of Christ and more nearly correct statements on salvation.

⁴³ See *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs* No. 10, "The Experience of Salvation." "...Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute *and Example*...." While it is true that Christ is our example, there is danger in seeing the "example" aspect of Christ's life as part of the foundation for salvation. Usually, evangelicals believe that following Christ's example is part of the Christian life *after* the experience of salvation.

quotations and footnotes above, then it is important that Christ was given no power which man cannot possess. Otherwise man, in reaching perfection of character and rendering perfect obedience to the law of God, would then have done something even more outstanding than Christ. For example, if Christ had a *sinless* nature and was our example in overcoming temptation, and if fallen man had a *sinful* nature and reached the same level of perfect obedience, then mankind would have accomplished a feat more outstanding than Christ's. Evangelical Adventists who stress Christ's work in substitutionary terms, however, believe Christ had a *sinless* nature. They rest in the perfect life of Christ, for their assurance is not based on perfectly following Christ's example, but upon God's gracious gift of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Soteriology and Christology are always closely linked. If one is erroneous, both will be wrong. If one is correct, chances are good that the other will be as well.⁴⁴

Many Historic Adventists would meet this fourth characteristic of a cult. EGW has statements which can be, and have been, used to support both the sinful and sinless nature of Christ.⁴⁵

5. Doctrinal ambiguity: "The truth doesn't have to make sense."

Little time needs to be spent on this characteristic of a cult. This book is dedicated to the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment,

⁴⁴ For a more complete discussion of this topic in Adventist theology and history see Douty, *Another look at Seventh-day Adventism*, pp. 48–64. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1962).

⁴⁵ See Herman Bauman paper, "Jesus' Human Nature: Sinless or Sinful?"

and the reader will by now see the inconsistencies and errors in *every* aspect of this doctrine. It simply does not make sense. For example, Ellen White said that the prayers of those who rejected the “truth” of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 were “useless” *because* they were directed to the first apartment which Jesus had left.⁴⁶

However, it was *only* the shut-door Adventists who taught that Christ *for the first time* entered the most holy of the heavenly sanctuary. All mainstream Christian churches held then, as they do today, the biblical view that Christ, *upon His ascension*, entered into the very presence of the Father and took His seat on the throne.⁴⁷ Therefore, Ellen White’s denunciation of the Christians who did not direct their prayers to the Most Holy Place was completely ridiculous and nonsensical. Without question, Historic Adventism meets the fifth characteristic of a cult.

6. Presumptuous leadership: “I know what is best for you.”

Anyone who has read Ellen White’s *Testimonies for the Church* would see many examples of this type of leadership. In the early years of her work EGW seems to have had a ministry of condemnation. As a youth, I fully believed in

⁴⁶ “I saw that the nominal churches, as the Jews crucified Jesus, had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the move made in heaven, or of the way into the Most Holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they offer up their *useless prayers* to the apartment which Jesus has left, and Satan, pleased with the deception of the professed followers of Christ, fastens them in his snare, and assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, and works with his power, his signs and lying wonders.” Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 171, 172.

⁴⁷ See Heb. 9, 10 NIV.

the writings of EGW. When my girl friend, who is now my wife, graduated from the twelfth grade, I purchased a set of *Testimonies*⁴⁸ and gave them to her as a gift. I encouraged her to read these. She started and was soon overwhelmed with the condemnation presented therein. I list only one illustration when hundreds could be given.⁴⁹

Do not think that because you pursue a certain course and do certain things it is an evidence that they are right and that you must present them to others as a rule or guide. It is not best for you to feel at liberty to speak your mind upon such matters as concern the welfare of our youth, recommending books which do not tend to spirituality or piety.

Retirement from the work of God at present is best for you. Brother R, you have neither perseverance nor moral backbone. You are very deficient in those traits of character which are necessary for the work of God at this time. You have not received that education in practical life that is necessary for you in order to make a success as a practical minister of Christ. Your education has been deficient in many respects. Your parents have not read your character, nor trained you to overcome its defects, to the end that you might develop a symmetrical character, and possess firmness, self-denial, self-control, humility, and moral power. You know very little of practical life or of perseverance under difficulties. You have a strong desire to controvert others' ideas and to press forward your own. This is the result of your feelings of self-sufficiency and of following your own inclinations in youth.

You do not see yourself and your errors. You are not willing to be a learner, but have a great desire to teach. You form opinions of your own and cling to your peculiar ideas with a persistency that is wearying. You are anxious to carry your points, and in your eyes your ideas are of greater importance

⁴⁸ "*Testimonies*" is a shortened term, well known in SDA circles for either the writings of Ellen White in general, or specifically the nine-volume set of *Testimonies for the Church*.

⁴⁹ I have purposely listed this long quote so the reader will have a chance to get the flavor of her denunciation. This type of condemnatory writing is very typical of the "testimonies" of EGW.

than the experienced judgment of men of moral worth who have been proved in this cause. You have been flattered with the idea that you had ability that would be prized and make you a valuable man; but these qualities have not been tested and proved. You have a one-sided education. You have no inclination or love for the homely, daily duties of life. Your indolence would be sufficient to disqualify you for the work of the ministry were there no other reasons why you should not engage in it. The cause does not need preachers so much as workers. Of all the vocations of life, there is none that requires such earnest, faithful, persevering, self-sacrificing workers as the cause of God in these last days.⁵⁰

In the first few volumes of the *Testimonies* this type of condemnatory writing goes on page after page. EGW addresses person after person in this polemic, critical manner. I found that just reviewing this material, which is void of the good news of the gospel, was very depressing.

Ellen G. White had a ministry of telling others what was best for them. And, as we have seen, often thoroughly condemned those who did not accept her testimonies as the voice of God speaking to them. Therefore, the SDA church meets this characteristic of a cult.

7. *Segmented interpretation of the Bible:* “These verses are more important.”

Ellen White has written some 52 books⁵¹ and many thousands of articles⁵² and in so doing she has commented on many, many Bible passages. However, there is no question that she placed special emphasis on both certain

⁵⁰ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 556.

⁵¹ That was until recently when the SDA church released another 21 volumes of her previously unpublished writings.

⁵² We know that she had many helpers who put her books together. We also know that she copied profusely. Nevertheless, because she has written so much she has commented on many, many Scriptures.

Scriptures and certain topics. This, in itself, is not necessarily bad unless the special emphasis makes minor things of major importance and major things of minor importance.

Ellen White placed much emphasis on the Sabbath. As mentioned earlier, she claims to have seen in vision that the fourth commandment had a special halo of light around it that was not on the other nine.⁵³ She uses the word “Sabbath” 3,315 times⁵⁴ when it is only found in 116 verses of Scripture. Her writings mention Satan 9,956 times when the Bible only mentions that name 47 times. When I was recently reading some of her early works, such as *Spiritual Gifts*, I was struck with the many times she spoke of the “frown of God” or “frown of Christ,” most of which had to do with the way Christ or the Father looked on Ellen White or some other Adventist believer who was not quite measuring up to perfection. I found that she uses this expression 147 times.

From my own experience in the SDA church, I recall classroom discussions having to do with the topic of “a canon within a canon” referring to the fact that Adventists use certain Scriptures over and over again while often—not always—neglecting other portions of the Bible. This SDA canon comprises the proof texts which support its 27 doctrinal beliefs.⁵⁵

⁵³ “The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. *But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God’s holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it.*” Ellen. G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 33.

⁵⁴ According to the computer search program on an EGW compact disk.

⁵⁵ It should not be inferred that there are not many good Bible students in the SDA church. Neither am I stating that SDAs do not study all the Bible. What I am concluding, however, is that they do stress certain topics, such as the Sabbath, more than others.

An example of this is seen in the SDA teaching on man's condition in death. SDAs will give top authority to the Old Testament statement:

For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten (Eccl. 9:5).

They will, however, unless forced to do so, seldom mention the passages in the New Testament which seem to support existence after death.⁵⁶ If one looks at the history of Adventist theological interests he will find that Adventism is often caught up in discussion of what most evangelicals would consider to be minor issues. For example the big debate over the meaning of the "daily,"⁵⁷ the time for beginning of Sabbath observance,⁵⁸ the question on the place and

⁵⁶ "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better." (Phil. 1:21–23). "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him." (2 Cor. 5:1–9).

⁵⁷ From Daniel 8:12 KJV.

⁵⁸ See Canright, *Life of Mrs. E.G. White*, p. 264 to 268. He describes the nine-year controversy Adventists had regarding the time to start Sabbath observance.

authority of the writings of EGW, and the meaning of prophecy. All of these point to the fact that there are a number of special emphases—outside of the gospel—that are very important to SDAs.

8. *Denunciation of other Christians: “All the other churches are wrong but ours.”*

This has been the mainstream teaching of Adventism since its very inception. Ellen White gave strong condemnations to those who did not accept her brand of truth. She states that the churches which did not receive Miller’s erroneous 1843 message were “false shepherds” standing in the way of the work of God and had “the blood of souls upon them.”⁵⁹ Later, when the “truth” was changed to 1844, she denounced the churches which would not accept the 1844 message,” calling them “Babylon” and “fallen churches.”⁶⁰ She never retracted her position that the

⁵⁹ “Many shepherds of the flock, who professed to love Jesus, said they had no opposition to the preaching of Christ’s coming; but they objected to the definite time. [In context, the time is 1843.] God’s all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not love Jesus near. They knew that their unchristian lives would not stand the test; for they were not walking in the humble path laid out by him. These false shepherds stood in the way of the work of God. The truth spoken in its convincing power to the people aroused them, and like the jailer, they began to inquire, What must I do to be saved. But these shepherds stepped between the truth and the people, and preached smooth things to lead them from the truth. They united with Satan and his angels, and cried, Peace, peace, when there was no peace. I saw that angels of God had marked it all, and the garments of those unconsecrated shepherds were covered with the blood of souls.” Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 135.

⁶⁰ “The churches would not receive the light of the first angel’s message [in context, 1843], and as they rejected the light from heaven they fell from the favor of God. They trusted in their own strength, and placed

Protestant churches were included in the term “Babylon.” When “truth” changed again and became the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, EGW again denounced those who did not follow the next link in the “perfect chain” of unfolding “truth.”⁶¹ When the people in the churches which did not accept the Adventist “truth,” prayed, EGW said their prayers were “useless” they and were answered by Satan.⁶² All true believers, according to Ellen White, would

themselves by their opposition to the first message where they could not see the light of the second angel’s message [in context, 1844]. But the beloved of God, who were oppressed, answered to the message, Babylon is fallen, and left the fallen churches.” Ibid., p. 140.

⁶¹ “Those who rejected and opposed the light of the first angel’s message, lost the light of the second, and could not be benefited by the power and glory which attended the message, Behold the Bridegroom cometh. Jesus turned from them with a frown. They had slighted and rejected him.” Ibid., pp. 155, 156.

⁶² “I saw that the nominal churches, as the Jews crucified Jesus, had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the move made in heaven, or of the way into the Most Holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they offer up their *useless prayers* to the apartment which Jesus has left, and Satan, pleased with the deception of the professed followers of Christ, fastens them in his snare, and assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, and works with his power, his signs and lying wonders. Some he deceives in one way and some in another. He has different delusions prepared to affect different minds. Some look with horror upon one deception, while they readily receive another. Satan deceives some with Spiritualism. He also comes as an angel of light, and spreads his influence over the land. I saw false reformations everywhere. The churches were elated, and considered that God was marvelously working for them, when it was another spirit.” Ibid., pp. 169, 170.

leave these “fallen churches” and take their stand with the “remnant.”⁶³

This exclusive spirit and denunciation of all others who did not accept the “truth” of Adventism is not only manifest in the early years of Adventism, but remains an integral part of SDA eschatology.⁶⁴ Read the chapter “The Loud Cry” in the *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, and the closing chapters of *The Great Controversy* and it will become transparently evident that all last-day, true believers, according to Adventist eschatology, will join the “remnant” people of God—Seventh-day Adventists. Even the name “Seventh-day Adventist” is designed to be a dividing mark between those who are right and those who are wrong.⁶⁵ Traditional

⁶³ “The light will shine, and every one of the honest ones will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant.” Ibid., pp. 172, 173.

⁶⁴ “The third angel’s message [now reinterpreted to be the denunciation of those who worship on Sunday and have the mark of the beast] must do its work of separating from the churches a people who will take their stand on the platform of eternal truth.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 61. See also the, *Australasian Union Conference Record*, 1900-06-01. “The message will be carried, as was the midnight cry of 1844, not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence; yet many whose minds have been impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side.” Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 430.

⁶⁵ “The name Seventh-day Adventist is a standing rebuke to the Protestant world. *Here is the line of distinction between the worshipers of God and those who worship the beast and receive his mark.* The great

SDA evangelism still practices denunciation of others who do not keep the Sabbath.⁶⁶

We see, then, that the SDA church meets this eighth characteristic of a cult.

9. *Limited eschatology*: “Jesus is coming only for us.”

This characteristic is closely linked with number eight and has been thoroughly documented under that section. The SDA doctrinal statement of the “remnant,” discussed earlier, establishes that SDAs meet this ninth characteristic of a cult. However, if some doubt that this is the teaching of the church, please read “The Time of Trouble” and “God’s People Delivered” in the *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4. It will become immediately evident that the only ones who will be saved are those who have accepted the Sabbath and who remain loyal to it in the face of persecution.

Therefore, the SDA church meets this cult characteristic.

10. *Messianic complex*: “We are God’s only hope to save the world.”

This, too, is a major teaching of Seventh-day Adventists. They feel called by God to proclaim the “truth” concerning the Adventist interpretation of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 and to prepare a people to meet God. The core themes of this message are the proclamation of the Sabbath “truth” in the context of the investigative judgment, and a warning to those who worship on Sunday that

conflict is between the commandments of God and the requirements of the beast.” Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4, p. 54.

⁶⁶ See *Sabbath in Christ*, p. 383 for a letter I received in 1995 from a young lady who attended a SDA Revelation Seminar.

they will receive the mark of the beast.⁶⁷ There are many quotations which express this. Here are just a few.

They [SDAs] are to stand as subjects of Christ's kingdom, bearing the banner on which is inscribed, "The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." *They* are to carry the burden of a *special work, a special message*. We have a personal responsibility, and this is to be revealed before the heavenly universe, before angels, and before men. God does not call upon us to enlarge our influence by mingling with society, by linking up with men on political questions, but by standing as individual parts of His great whole, with Christ as our head. Christ is our Prince, and as His subjects we are to do the work appointed us by God.⁶⁸

If there is committed to us a *special message*, as we believe, that message must go, without reference to the customs or prejudices of the world, not governed by a policy of fear or favor. Some will receive it and be sanctified through it, though multitudes will oppose and reject it. But it must go everywhere till the very earth is lightened with its glory.⁶⁹

The Lord has a *special message* for us to bear to the world, even the third angel's message. The first and second angel's messages are bound up with the third.⁷⁰

I felt the deep moving of the Spirit of God upon me, and I know that the Lord gave me a *special message* for his people at this time.⁷¹

The Lord has given me a *special message* for the churches that claim to believe the truth for these last days.⁷²

⁶⁷ "Elder Haskell was presenting strong reasons why the books which contain the knowledge that has been communicated to Sister White—the books containing the *special message* to come to the world at this present time—should be more freely circulated." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 67.

⁶⁸ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 393.

⁶⁹ Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches*, p. 314.

⁷⁰ Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1900-01-01.

⁷¹ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1909-03-11.

Ellen White, on numerous occasions, felt she had a special message from God. The understanding of this message was necessary for salvation.⁷³ The SDA church meets this tenth characteristic of a cult. We have now seen that the SDA church—at least the Historic Adventist church—meets ten of the typical characteristics of a “Christian” cult.

11. *Disbelief in the triune nature of God.*

Adventists believe in the Trinity⁷⁴ and therefore do not meet this common cult characteristic.

12. *Disbelief in the deity of Christ.*

In the early years of Adventism the full deity of Christ was not clearly taught. However, Adventists today believe in the full deity of Christ as evidenced by *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs* No. 2 and No. 4.⁷⁵ Therefore they do not meet this cult characteristic.

13. *Disbelief in the personality of the Holy Spirit.*

Adventists hold an orthodox view of the Holy Spirit and do not meet this characteristic of a cult.⁷⁶

⁷² Ibid., 1909-09-23.

⁷³ The Adventist interpretations of both the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ in the Most Holy Place, and the Sabbath, are life and death issues with EGW.

⁷⁴ See statement No. 2 in *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*.

⁷⁵ See Appendix A, for a complete listing of the *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*.

⁷⁶ See *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*, Nos. 2 and 5 in Appendix A.

14. *Disbelief in Christ's bodily resurrection.*

Seventh-day Adventists have always believed in the bodily resurrection of Christ and do not meet this cult characteristic.⁷⁷

15. *A misunderstanding of Justification by faith.*

The Historic Adventist church, as we have seen, did not clearly understand this important doctrine. This will become more evident in a later chapter. Justification by faith is, however, clearly understood by modern Evangelical Adventists. Most Historic Adventists would also say they believe in justification by faith. However, in this latter group, their understanding of this doctrine is often limited. They see justification as taking care of their *past sin*, but are often unclear about it providing *present* and *future* righteousness. Justification by faith is often seen as only one half of the process of salvation. The other half is sanctification. Often their concept of the gospel—the ground of salvation—*includes both*. In this way, human works—even if these works are works of faith—are included in sanctification, which is also included in the basis of salvation.⁷⁸

Liberal Adventists would also say they believe in justification by faith, but for them this doctrine is not seen in forensic terms. Their justification by faith is not rooted in the substitutionary aspects of the atonement, but in complete trust in the loving, non-punishing character of God.

We conclude, therefore, that only the Evangelical Adventists *clearly* understand justification by faith. In the

⁷⁷ See *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*, No. 25 in Appendix A.

⁷⁸ In the late '70s and early '80s this was the hot topic of discussion in Adventist circles. See Paxton, *The Shaking of Adventism*, pp. 121–156. See also Brinsmead, *Judged by the Gospel*.

other two schools of Adventist thought there is often some confusion on this most important doctrine.⁷⁹ Therefore some in the SDA church do not meet this characteristic of a cult, but others do.⁸⁰

Summarizing this section we see that the SDA church, at least the Historic SDA church, meets many cult characteristics. To their credit, however, they do not meet them all.

There are no hard and fast rules about how many characteristics of a cult an organization must meet before being considered a cult. For this reason, perhaps, evangelicals have moved Adventists in and out of the realm of the cults.

From a number of recent⁸¹ conversations with evangelical SDA pastors, it appears there is a polarization taking place within the SDA church. The Historic Adventists appear to be in control of certain SDA institutions⁸² and denominational journals.⁸³ Liberal Adventists seem to be in control of some SDA institutions.⁸⁴ Evangelical Adventists are said to be in control of at least one SDA journal.⁸⁵ Several pastors expressed the idea that sooner or later there will be a split in the SDA church, for the beliefs of the two groups are mutually exclusive. It appears that the Evangeli-

⁷⁹ I do not want to imply that no Historic or Liberal Adventist understands justification by faith. Rather, I am speaking in general terms.

⁸⁰ When visiting a SDA Sabbath School class in early January 1996, the question was asked, "What is our ticket to heaven?" One person (not a SDA) responded, "Belief in Christ." The teacher said, "What did you say?" The person who first responded did not answer and then there was a chorus from the Adventists, "The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

⁸¹ January 1996.

⁸² The SDA Seminary at Andrews University and the General Conference.

⁸³ The Sabbath School Lessons.

⁸⁴ Columbia Union College and perhaps Loma Linda University.

⁸⁵ *Ministry Magazine*.

cal Adventists are doing what they can to *again* reinterpret the SDA message so that it is biblical. In some areas, however, it was expressed to me that this is an impossibility.

I have mixed reactions about Evangelical Adventists. Sometimes I question if they should actually be called Adventists.⁸⁶ At other times I am overjoyed that they can hold such orthodox theology and yet remain in the SDA church. This fact brings hope that the church, at least in some sections, is moving toward the acceptance of evangelical beliefs. For this I am grateful. One reviewer of the first draft of this book had a third reaction to Evangelical Adventists.

Evangelical Adventist pastors are only helping to prop up a spiritually abusive, cultic institution in which, indeed, they do not truly fit or belong. Their presence there only gives whiter fleece to the wolves, making those wolves' deception that much more pernicious.⁸⁷

Chapter Summary

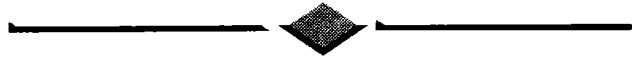
1. Many evangelicals believe that *early* Historic Adventism should be considered a cult.
2. The current SDA church—at least the Historic Adventist wing—meets many, but not all, of the typical cult characteristics.
3. Evangelical Adventists should not be considered a cult.

⁸⁶ Many—perhaps most—Evangelical Adventists disagree with the following *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*: the SDA concept of remnant, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, the writings of EGW as a continuing and authoritative source of truth, and the Seventh-day Sabbath as a test for all true Christians, now or in the future.

⁸⁷ This person requested anonymity.

I testify
to everyone who hears
the words of the
prophecy of this book
if anyone adds to them
God shall add to him
plagues which are
written in this book

Chapter 18



Tampering With the Word

Additions to Scripture

One of the marks of a cult is that it has an additional source of authority. We have previously documented that for SDAs this additional source is the writings of Ellen G. White. Some cults, such as the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses, have their own

Bibles which they claim to be more accurate than other Bibles. It appears to me that there is some indication that the Historic Adventists may be moving in this same direction.

The new Bibles printed and sold by SDA entities

When I was a pastor and Bible teacher in the SDA church, I used to tell my students that one of the *good* things about the SDA church was that it did not have its own translation of the Bible as did the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Mormons. Rather, SDA doctrines could be supported by any trustworthy translation. This was before I came to fully realize that some of the SDA doctrines could *not* be proved from the Bible alone. As mentioned in the first chapter of this book, one of the things that prompted me to write this book was the discovery that the SDA community had come out with two new Bibles. This is alarming and should come to the attention of the evangelical community.

The Study Bible

The Study Bible is a large, expensive, leather-bound King James Bible. The copyright is 1993 by Academy Enterprises, Inc., 6200 Academy Lane, Harrah, Oklahoma 73405, which is a self-supporting, conservative, Seventh-day Adventist high school. This Bible is printed by the SDA denominationally-owned and operated Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland. I now quote from the introduction entitled "About the Study Bible."

Every wind of doctrine blows (Eph 4:14). Satan is working “with all power and signs and lying wonders” (1 Thess 2:10). Deceptions are so great, that “if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt 24:24). But God in his goodness has once again caused “the testimony of Christ” to be confirmed in his church, so that we “come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:6-7). His last day remnant people have had restored through the ministry of Ellen G. White, “the testimony of Jesus” which is “the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 12:17, 19:10). *To combine this inspired commentary with the Scriptures themselves is the purpose of this present volume.*

It is the heartfelt and earnest prayer of the publishers, that this inspired Word, *with its accompanying inspired commentary*, will go out into all the world and prepare a people for the great day of God. We urge God’s faithful people everywhere to diligently study the Word: “therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul” (Deut 11:18), “bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart” (Prov 7:3), “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col 3:16). May a mighty army of laborers be thus raised up to finish the work—an army fitted with the character of Christ, and the message of the everlasting Gospel.

Several things should be noticed.

- *The Study Bible* was printed at an official, denominational press and is sold in Adventist Book Centers throughout the U.S. Therefore, it at least has the passive approval of denominational leaders.
- It is a King James Bible. The investigative judgment is dependent upon the reading of the King James Bible at Daniel 8:14. Even though SDAs must completely disregard the context of Daniel 8:14, still it is important to them to have the word “cleansed” there, for without this they are helpless to find *any* support for this doctrine.

- The writings of Ellen White, called the “testimony of Jesus” and the “spirit of prophecy,” are seen as part and parcel of the last-day remnant church.¹
- The writings of Ellen White are called “an inspired commentary.”
- The purpose of *The Study Bible* is “to combine this inspired commentary with the Scriptures themselves.”
- *The Study Bible* has hundreds of EGW quotes and thousands of EGW references. There are two columns on each page. In one column are Bible cross references and in a second column are EGW cross references. On the lower portion of most pages there are actual quotations from Ellen White giving her “inspired commentary.”
- Of interest to our study, at Daniel 8:14 there are listed some 32 EGW references of “inspired commentary” on this central pillar of the Adventist faith.

This “combining” of Ellen White’s “inspired commentary” with Scripture raises many serious questions. Study Bibles in themselves are not necessarily bad, and there are many of them. However, I know of no other study Bible, outside of the cults, that claims the added comments to be an “inspired commentary.” This, coupled with the fact that SDAs hold the writings of EGW to be a “continuing and authoritative source of truth,” raises serious questions about the direction the SDA church is now going. But this is only the tip of the iceberg. We now turn to a second new SDA Bible.

¹ See *Sabbath in Christ*, pp. 372 ff. where this is evaluated in depth.

The Clear Word Bible

The Clear Word Bible is copyrighted by Jack J. Blanco, Th. D., who is chair of the Religion Department of Southern College in Chattanooga, Tennessee—a college owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. *The Clear Word Bible* is printed by the denominationally-owned Review and Herald Publishing Association and has a copyright date of 1994. It is also distributed by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. It, too, is sold in Adventist Book Centers throughout the country. The last several times I have been in an Adventist Book Center,² *The Clear Word Bible* has been prominently displayed and/or on sale, and upon my inquiry, highly recommended. It is my understanding that at least some SDA scholars have criticized this work, but it remains in Adventist bookstores and is used by many Adventists³.

The Clear Word Bible is “a paraphrase to nurture faith and growth.” On the back cover we find this quote:

The Clear Word Bible lets the power of ancient text come through today. Notice that if an allusion needs explaining, it is explained within the text. The result of this careful paraphrasing is that you find not only more understanding in reading the Bible, you find more joy. As the meaning of Scripture becomes more transparent, you see more of God’s grace. His love shines through even in difficult Old Testament passages. This Bible is a pleasure to read from Genesis to Revelation. *The Clear Word Bible* has renewed the devotional lives of thousands of people. Let it renew yours.

Inside the jacket cover we read:

² August 1995 to February 1996.

³ Recently (January 1996) when visiting a SDA church service, *The Clear Word Bible* was used for the Scripture reading in the worship service.

Every text is phrased to make its *original meaning* as plain as possible to a modern reader.

Several things need to be noticed before we turn to the actual text of this “Bible.”

- It is produced by the chair of the Religion Department of a SDA denominationally-owned college.
- It is published and distributed by official denominational entities.
- It is stated that in this “Bible,” ancient texts “come to light” or are given their true meaning.
- It is said to be a “careful paraphrasing.”
- It claims to make the meaning of Scripture “more transparent.”
- In this “Bible” God’s “love shines through even in difficult Old Testament passages.”
- It claims to be “phrased to make its *original meaning* as plain as possible.”
- The title, *The Clear Word Bible*, communicates that it is a trustworthy work.

Now, I lay out before the evangelical community one of the things that should help answer the question, “Is the SDA church a cult?” Apparently, reasoning like the Mormons and the Jehovah’s Witnesses, someone, or some group, within the SDA church said, “If the Bible does not support the investigative judgment at Daniel 8:14, let’s change the Bible so it will.” On the next page in two columns is Daniel 8:12–14—the “central pillar” of the Advent faith. The column on the left is from *The New American Standard Bible*. The column on the right is from *The Clear Word Bible*. Please note the unwarranted additions to the text which *read into* this “Bible” the SDA teaching of the investigative judgment.

The New American Standard

Daniel 8:12-14

¹² And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper.

¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?"

¹⁴ And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored."

The Clear Word Bible

Daniel 8:12-14

¹² Because of their sins, the people of God were given over to this power, and the services of the Temple ceased. Then I saw the little horn change its appearance and attack the truth about the Sanctuary of God and the daily intercession *in heaven*. The little horn practiced and prospered.

¹³ Now one of the angels said something to my angel and my angel asked him the very questions I wanted to ask. He said, "How long will God let the little horn try to take God's place? How much longer will God continue to let it pervert the *truth about Himself* and the Sanctuary *in heaven* and allow it to persecute His people?"

¹⁴ He said to him, "After two thousand three hundred *prophetic days* (or two thousand three hundred years), God will step in, proclaim *the truth about Himself* and restore the ministry of the Sanctuary *in heaven* to its rightful place. *This is when the judgment will begin, of which the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary was a type.*"

It was when I read this that I felt impelled to write this book. What was the motive behind inserting into the text that which is not there? Could it have been to make the SDA reader think that the investigative judgment is biblical? Why would one who holds a doctorate in theology want to do this? The additions to the text have *no* basis whatever in the original text even if they are in quotes as if from an angel. Is this really “phrased to make its *original meaning* as plain as possible”? Could this be another result of investigative judgment ethics? Could this be the byproduct of holding Ellen G. White as an “inspired commentary” to the Bible? Could this be a predictable end when the writings of Ellen White are included in the term, “the Bible only”?⁴

I first came in contact with *The Clear Word Bible* when I was asked by two members of the Sedona Christian Fellowship, where I am pastoring at the time of this writing, to accompany them to a Bible study. This Bible study was requested by two Seventh-day Adventists and was held in their home. During our discussion the Adventists brought out *The Clear Word Bible*, introducing it as one of the best translations and stating that it made truth very clear and understandable.⁵ They were using it as a basis for doctrinal

⁴ “When we claim to stand on the Bible and the Bible alone, we bind ourselves to receive, unequivocally and fully, all that the Bible teaches.... We do not, then discard, but obey, the Bible *by endorsing the visions* [of E.G. White].” Uriah Smith [renowned, early Adventist leader and contemporary of Ellen White], *Review and Herald*, Jan. 13, 1886, as quoted in *Ministry*, Oct., 1980, p. 54.

⁵ It should be noted that *The Clear Word Bible* appears to be a very good paraphrase overall. However, where the text of a literal translation, such as *The New American Standard Bible*, does not support questionable SDA theology, *The Clear Word Bible* may show unwarranted bias, as is the case with Daniel 8:12–14. I also found

study. When I read this portion of Daniel, I was dumfounded.

My eyes were opened to the errors of Adventism when I gave serious study to the investigative judgment and found it wanting. Now the average SDA lay person, who trusts in SDA “scholarship” and the “integrity” of Bibles published in a SDA publishing house and sold in Adventist Book Centers, will believe that Daniel 8:14 is a valid basis for the investigative judgment. Is this any different from the Jehovah’s Witnesses translating John in such a way that the divinity of Christ is compromised to fit their theology? Is this any different from the Mormons translating their own Bible with the additions and/or corrections of Joseph Smith to fit their teachings?

Years ago, G. A. Irwin, President of the General Conference of SDAs, wrote that the writings of EGW were,

...the *only* infallible interpreter of Bible principles.⁶

Apparently, this idea is not yet dead in the Adventist church.

Dr. Verle Streifling, former SDA pastor, has written twenty-two pages documenting the omissions, changes or additions in *The Clear Word Bible* that effect doctrinal teaching. These include distortions in the creation account; distortions which undermine the full deity of Christ; distortions which present Jesus as an angelic being; distortions made to support SDA sanctuary theology; distortions about the nature of man and man’s condition in death; distortions which mandate old covenant practices for

several places in Paul’s epistles which deal with the covenants to be quite confusing.

⁶ G. A. Irwin, *The Mark of the Beast*, p. 1, as printed in Canright, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 35.

new covenant Christians, especially the Seventh-day Sabbath and distortions regarding the doctrine of hell.⁷

Which direction is the SDA church going?

At the General Conference session held in 1980, changes were made to the *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*. Of interest to us at this point are the statements on “Scripture” and “The Gift of Prophecy.” In each of the following pairs I will highlight the important difference in wording.

The pre-1980 statement on Scripture reads as follows:

1. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament were given by inspiration of God, contain an *all-sufficient* revelation of His will to men, and are the *only* unerring rule of faith and practice.⁸

The changed, 1980 statement reads as follows:

1. The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history.⁹

It will immediately be seen that in the revised statement they left out the words “all sufficient” and “only.” Why would they do this? The answer comes when we compare the two statements on the Gift of Prophecy which are numbered differently in the two statements. The first state-

⁷ This paper may be downloaded from LAM, Inc. Web site at <http://www.ratzlaf.com/downloads.htm>.

⁸ *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*, 1976, p. 32.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1990, p. 23.

ment below is the pre-1980 statement, the second is the revised one.

19. That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12). That the gift of the Spirit of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church (1 Cor. 1:5–7; 12:1–28; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; Amos 3:7; Hose 12:10, 13). They recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White.¹⁰

17. The Gift of Prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, *her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth* which provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.¹¹

It can be seen that in 1980 the SDA church moved away from Scripture as the *all sufficient* and the *only* unerring rule of faith and practice, and accepted the writings of Ellen G. White as *a continuing and authoritative source of truth*. It should be noted that this change occurred when the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment was being questioned.

Where is the SDA church now (2003) moving in its theology? In a recent article in the *Review and Herald* Jan Paulson, President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, made it very clear that the church would continue to teach *all* twenty seven of its Fundamental

¹⁰ Ibid., 1976, p. 37.

¹¹ Ibid., 1990, p. 28.

Beliefs. He also reinforced the exclusivity of SDAs by saying:

...We believe that being Seventh-day Adventists has a direct bearing on our salvation; that while a believer can be saved as a Catholic, I would risk my whole spiritual life and salvation were I to leave what I am now and join any other community.¹²

Chapter Summary

1. The stated purpose of *The Study Bible* is to combine the “inspired commentary” of the writings of Ellen G. White with the Scriptures themselves.
2. *The Clear Word Bible*, which alleges “to make its *original meaning* as plain as possible,” has unwarranted additions to the text at Daniel 8:12–14, making it appear that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment is a biblical doctrine.
3. An early General Conference president stated that the writings of Ellen G. White were “the *only* infallible interpreter of Bible principles.”
4. In 1980 the SDA denomination moved away from Scripture as the *all sufficient* and the *only* unerring rule of faith and practice, and included the writings of Ellen G. White as “a continuing and authoritative source of truth.” However, it also states (in theory) that the Bible is to be the ultimate test of all prophetic writings.
5. SDAs continue (in 2003) to support *all* twenty seven of their “Fundamental Beliefs” and hold to the exclusiveness of the SDA church.

¹² Jan Paulson, “The Theological Landscape” No. 4, “The Idea of Remnant” printed in the *Adventist Review*, (Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, MD, 2002).

Chapter 19



The Gospel Test

Chapter 15 was a short, biblical study on judgment that contrasted the teachings of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment with Scripture. In this chapter we will focus on the new covenant gospel of grace. While these two subjects do overlap, there are, nevertheless, important differences. The question we now address is, Does the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment distort, undermine, or contradict the one and only new covenant gospel of grace? This is the acid test. All that has been said thus far—as important as it is—fades, in comparison with this test. Paul was very bold in his comments toward people who came to the churches he had founded with the additional requirement of law-keeping for salvation.

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:6–9).

One of the main characteristics of a cult, according to Watchman Fellowship¹ is that a cult multiplies the requirements for salvation.²

There are two formulas for salvation. One is biblical and the other is that of the cults. Which is the formula that will bring eternal life and which will bring eternal destruction?

Faith = Salvation + Works

or

Faith + Works = Salvation

The first is the formula used by the writers of the Bible. In Ephesians 2:8–10, Paul explains that salvation is a gift of God based on faith. But even the faith itself comes from God. Then, after salvation comes good works. Why are people saved by God's unmerited Grace? One reason, Paul says, is to do good works. Salvation caused mankind to become a new creature in Christ "unto good works." Christians will do good works, not because they must do so to gain salvation, rather it has become their new nature. Because they have become new creatures in Christ, they will desire to do good works. Hence, the first formula is biblical.

However, it is the second formula that the cults will always use. They will place works before salvation. What works? Each

¹ Watchman Fellowship, P.O. Box 13340, Arlington, TX 76094. This organization has a ministry to cults and instructs Christians about cults.

² See Rick Branch, "Profile, Patterns In The Cults," in *Watchman Expositor*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1994.

group will have its own unique list which must be followed to the letter of the Law, or else salvation is out of reach....

One final way that cults will link works to salvation is through obedience to Old Testament Law. Some groups will explain that worship must be conducted on Saturday [the Old Testament Sabbath] and that the Feast Days must be observed. They will also promote the idea of following the Old Testament dietary laws. Some of the Sabbatarian and identity groups fall into this category.

Summarizing what we have already discovered regarding the statements of EGW and salvation we find the following:

- The 1843 second-coming message was a “saving message” and pastors who resisted this message had “the blood of souls” upon themselves.³
- Churches which rejected the revised 1844 sanctuary “truth” fell from God’s favor and became “Babylon.” The people in these churches were deceived by Satan, and their prayers were useless.⁴
- Christians should *never* say “I am saved.”⁵

³ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 243.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 140, 172, 173.

⁵ “We are *never* to rest in a satisfied condition, and cease to make advancement, saying, ‘*I am saved.*’ When this idea is entertained, the motives for watchfulness, for prayer, for earnest endeavor to press onward to higher attainments, cease to exist. *No sanctified tongue will be found uttering these words till Christ shall come, and we enter in through the gates into the city of God.*” Ellen G. White, *The Kress Collection*, p. 120. The important thing is *why* EGW said this. “*No man can say, I am saved, until he has endured test and trial, until he has shown that he can overcome temptation.*” Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1890-06-17. EGW taught that only those who had *proven* they could overcome temptation could lay claim to salvation. And then she put this out of the reach of all by saying that assurance of salvation could only be had *after* the second coming.

- Only those who keep the Sabbath will be saved in the last days.⁶
- There will be no change in character at the second coming.⁷
- Ellen White says we are *not* saved by faith alone.⁸
- We must live a life of “perfect obedience” *before* God’s promises will be fulfilled to us.⁹
- We are to be judged by our “deeds.”¹⁰

If one reads the writings of EGW and other Adventists, especially those written prior to 1888, it will be apparent

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry*, p. 123.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1892-06-21.

⁸ “Faith and works are the two oars with which we are to make our way in the Christian life. The Lord calls upon all who think they know what faith is, to be sure that they are not pulling with only one oar, and their little bark [boat] going round and round, making no progress at all. Faith without intelligent works is dead. *Faith in the healing power of God will not save unless it is combined with good works.*” Ellen G. White, *Australasian Union Record*, 1905-10-15. “It is Satan’s studied effort to divert the minds of men from the one way of salvation,—faith in Christ, *and* obedience to the law of God.” *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 192.

⁹ “If we live a life of *perfect obedience*, His promises will be fulfilled toward us.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 122. “What God promises He is able at any time to perform, and the work which He gives His people to do He is able to accomplish by them. If they will live according to every word He has spoken, every good word and promise will be fulfilled unto them. But *if they come short of perfect obedience, the great and precious promises are afar off, and they cannot reach the fulfillment.*” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 148.

¹⁰ “Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe. Though they may be forgotten by us, *they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn.* They go before us to the Judgment.” Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 311.

that the Adventists had a different gospel. It was not the Pauline gospel of justification by faith. Rather, it was outright legalism or at best Galatianism. In either case, the SDA gospel, *especially* the theology taught in connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, would qualify for Paul's condemnation in Galatians 1:6–9.

It is important that we understand well the context of Paul's statement. The Galatians were teaching that Christians were saved by faith *and* the works of the law. That this law was the old covenant law, including the Ten Commandments is evident. Even Ellen White herself finally admitted this.¹¹ Paul said:

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the *works of the Law*, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (Gal. 3:1–3)

Paul states that the law was given 430 years *after* Abraham¹² and was to continue *until* Christ.¹³ He defines the law as a “tutor”¹⁴ and then says:

¹¹ “I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the school-master to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments.” Ellen G. White, Ms. 87, 1900, in *1888 Materials*, p. 1725, Oakland, California.

¹² “What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.” Gal. 3:17.

¹³ “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, *until* the seed should come to whom the promise had been made. Gal. 3:19.

¹⁴ “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.” Gal. 3:24.

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (Gal. 3:25).

Paul says that the problem with the Galatians was that they wanted to be *under law*.¹⁵ It is clear from the Epistles that *the old covenant law is seen in its totality*. It includes *both* the Ten Commandments *and* the other laws.¹⁶

Evaluation

It is quite evident to this writer that Historic Adventism¹⁷ had, and some Historic Adventists may continue to have, a different gospel.¹⁸ It is clearly a gospel of:

Faith + Works = Salvation

This, according to Watchman Fellowship, is the mark of a cult. This, according to Paul, is a distortion of the true gospel of Christ, and the strong words to the Galatians are applicable.

¹⁵ "Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?" Gal. 4:21.

¹⁶ See *Sabbath in Christ*, in the chapter, "Sabbath in the Epistles", where this is covered in depth. Note also the following: 2 Cor. 3:3–11 defines the old covenant as written both with "ink" and on "tables of stone." In Heb. 8:13 where the author states that the first covenant is now "obsolete," he goes on to define what was included in the first covenant and concludes with "the tables of the covenant." (Heb. 9:4). The Old Testament declares that the Ten Commandments are the "words of the covenant." See also Ex. 31:18; 34:28; Deut. 9:9, 11, 15; 1 Ki. 8:9, 21.

¹⁷ By this term I mean the early, pre-1888 SDA church. There are many Evangelical SDA's who *do* understand the gospel correctly.

¹⁸ It should be noted that in Paul's admonition to the Galatians the Greek wording makes it clear that the different gospel is really not another gospel, but a false, counterfeit gospel.

Ellen White claims to have seen in vision that an *angel from God* guided William Miller in his methods and conclusions which were erroneous, and she called his message a “saving message.” Ellen White used the term, “I saw” 1,933 times; “I was shown” 978 times; “said the angel” 265 times; “in vision” 320 times; and “light given me” 153 times.¹⁹ It is evident that she is claiming divine authority for her statements. As we have seen throughout this book, many of her statements are totally erroneous, and here is the important point: many of them distort, undermine or contradict the new covenant gospel of grace. If we apply the teaching of Paul in Galatians 1:8, 9 to these early EGW statements that distort, undermine, or contradict the gospel, then Ellen White would become the focus of Paul’s condemnation.

There are other, later statements of EGW where she teaches the gospel correctly. She will, however, often give the gospel with her right hand and then take it away with her left. This was a continual frustration to me as I was seeking to understand the gospel. I would read passages from *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, pages 300–400 and find many quotes which were in harmony with the gospel, then I would read statements throughout her other writings where her statements were either wrong or compromised the gospel.

The hermeneutic of “here a little and there a little”

When I have pointed out to Adventists, even Evangelical Adventists, the legalistic, erroneous statements of EGW which distort the gospel, they often respond by saying, “Yes, but look in ... for a correct statement.” I do not like

¹⁹ According to an EGW compact disk.

the comparison, but I find this very similar to what the Jehovah's Witnesses do in Scripture. Should a post-New Testament inspired writer *ever* compromise the gospel?

Two things should be said about EGW's erroneous gospel statements. First, they are often made in connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment. Second, EGW claims to be "a messenger of God" and to speak with divine authority. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the person evaluating her writings to look for inconsistencies and errors. If there are no major erroneous statements, especially regarding the gospel, then her claim *may* be authentic. However, if her writings have a mixture of truth and error, even if, in the mix, there is more truth than error, the error exposes her claim to divine authority as false. Not only that, but a little error mixed with large amounts of truth makes the error even more dangerous in that the reader is less likely to discern the error. A large helping of good food may render a poison even more dangerous because it is undetected. In recent conversations²⁰ with Adventist pastors, many have criticized me for taking an all-or-nothing stance in regard to Ellen White. Some have quoted 1 Thessalonians 5:19–21.

Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.

This must mean one of two things: Either one is to pick and choose from the prophetic utterance of a true prophet, or one must discriminate between a true and false prophet by the prophetic utterance. I believe the latter is the correct understanding.²¹ However, even if one takes the former, as

²⁰ January 1996.

²¹ "Paul, therefore, states what course of action the congregation should take....The standard by which the true prophet can be distinguished

was suggested to me by several Adventist pastors, then the doctrinal statement on EGW's writings ought to read, "some of the writings of Ellen G. White are a continuing and authoritative source of truth." However, if that were the case, how would one know which statements to keep and which ones to throw out? The dilemma is obvious.

Nevertheless, in practice, Adventists often feel free to accept EGW as an inspired prophet, and then pick and choose within her writings, taking that which is good and harmonizes with the gospel, and discarding the rest. I recall a presentation on EGW given about 1981 by a professor from the SDA seminary, Andrews University, at a SDA Pacific Union Conference Constituency Meeting in Southern California. After his presentation the professor was asked what one should do about some of the erroneous statements found in the writings of Ellen White. His answer was in the form of an illustration. "When eating fish," he said, "one takes the meat and discards the bones." Are Adventists willing to use this pick-and-choose method of "here a little and there a little" in evaluating the writings of other modern-day religious movements or prophets?

Christians who evaluate the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses zero in on their erroneous doctrine of Christ, their works theory of salvation, and the importance of 1914, and conclude that these errors undermine the whole system. The same can be said for the Mormons. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had *many good things* to say. Their emphasis on healthful living, honest labor, assistance of the poor, and support of family values immediately come to

from the false is that the former will declare *nothing* that is contrary to what God has made known previously, in his special revelation." William Hendricksen, *New Testament Commentary, Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1955) p. 140.

mind. However, their gospel is “another gospel” which is foreign to Scripture. Brigham Young’s chilling statements on blood atonement²² are enough to identify him as a false teacher even if there were no other doctrinal errors in his writings. Granted, these errors are of a greater magnitude than those in the writings of EGW. Nevertheless, one could use the “here a little and there a little” hermeneutic and conclude that the writings of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Mormons are inspired. Should one simply overlook erroneous statements of “inspired writers” which compromise the gospel? What kind of a continuing “authoritative source of truth” is it that requires this kind of treatment? Add to this the fact that EGW instructs Adventists *not* to pick and choose in her writings. She taught an “either/or” stance on her own writings. She, herself, forces the issue. She states that her writings are *either* of God *or* of Satan. She leaves no middle ground.²³ She claims that

²² For example, Brigham Young taught: “Will you love your brothers or sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood?” “This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it...That is the way to love mankind.” See Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, pp. 179, 219, 220, 1857; Vol. 8, p. 61, 1860. See also *The Watchman Expositor*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1994, p. 8.

²³ “And now, brethren, I entreat you not to interpose between me and the people, and turn away the light which God would have come to them. Do not by your criticisms take out all the force, all the point and power, from the Testimonies [her writings]. *Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas*, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom. *If the Testimonies speak not according to the word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united.* For Christ’s sake do not confuse the minds of the people with human sophistry and skepticism, and make of none effect the work that the Lord

her writings are “without one heretical sentence.”²⁴ She states that in her *Testimonies* “it is God, not an erring mortal, who has spoken.”²⁵ In our study thus far we have already found *many* heretical statements which *cannot* be from God. How can the writings of EGW continue as “an authoritative source of truth”? If we follow her own counsel of *not* accepting the hermeneutic of “here a little and there a little,” then we should do as she said:

If the Testimonies speak not according to the word of God, reject them.²⁶

The conclusion seems obvious. Remember, Paul said to let the prophets speak “and the others pass judgment.”²⁷

The gospel is still misunderstood by many SDAs

When I was a pastor in the Southern California Conference of SDAs about 1971, one of the monthly conference ministerial meetings featured speakers from Campus Crusade. They introduced us to the *Four Spiritual Laws*. I heard several SDA pastors say, “What are these Babylo-

would do. Do not, by your lack of spiritual discernment, make of this agency of God a rock of offense whereby many shall be caused to stumble and fall, ‘and be snared, and be taken.’” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 691.

²⁴ “I have the most precious matter to reproduce and *place before the people in testimony form*. While I am able to do this work, the people must have these things, to revive past truth, *without one heretical sentence, in that which I have written*. This, I am instructed, is to be a living letter to *all* in regard to my faith.” Ellen. G. White, addressed to “My dear Granddaughter Mabel,” Nov. 16, 1905. Please notice the late date for this statement.

²⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 682.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 691.

²⁷ 1 Cor. 14:29.

ans doing here trying to teach *us* the gospel? They believe one can be saved without keeping the law.”

When I was teaching in a Seventh-day Adventist high school,²⁸ I developed a true and false test on the gospel which I gave to my eleventh-grade Bible Doctrines class. This test was given several years in a row to over 200 students. Most of these students were reared in SDA homes and had been educated in SDA schools which required taking a Bible class every year. The results were that they missed approximately fifty percent of the questions. In a true and false test with only two possible answers they could have guessed at all the answers and achieved the same score. I gave this same test to a large group of adult Seventh-day Adventists with the same results. Some years later, I gave the same test to adult members in a Christian and Missionary Alliance church and also to members of an Evangelical Covenant church. In these two churches an overwhelming majority answered correctly. Why? With all the extra light from heaven given through EGW, with all the thousands of pages of “inspired commentary,” why do so many SDAs still not understand the gospel? In my recent²⁹ conversations with Evangelical SDA pastors and teachers, one of the reasons they give for staying in the SDA church is that they have an opportunity to teach the gospel to SDAs who still do not understand it. That this is necessary is tragic!

In the October 1992 issue of *Ministry*,³⁰ editor J. David Newman wrote an open letter to the General Conference

²⁸ 1972 to 1979.

²⁹ January 1996.

³⁰ The magazine for SDA pastors which is said to be in the Evangelical camp of Adventism.

president. In this letter he alludes to the difficulty of being totally open when facing problems in the SDA church.

Anyone who raises the question that all is not well faces suspicion and charges of disloyalty to this church.

Then he goes on to show that the SDA church still does not understand the basics of salvation. The following quotations come from the section under the heading, "Two Views of Salvation." That which is in brackets is my comment.

Brother president, you have told me that the burden of your heart is to see that our people have the assurance of salvation. Why is it that after almost 150 years of existence our people do not understand the most basic of all doctrines? I and my associate editors find lamentable confusion throughout the world field in this area. I believe it is because we have not settled what is the basis of our salvation. Some of us [Historic Adventists assumed] are teaching a disguised Roman Catholic theology of salvation. Others are confused as to what balance they should follow in emphasizing the work of Christ for us and the work of Christ in us.³¹

I have been surprised by the letters and comments we have received suggesting our main mission is *not* to uplift Jesus Christ....Our emphasis now must be victory over sin, achieving a character perfection that no other generation has achieved.³²

The last paragraph reflects the theology of Historic Adventists. This is the theology springing from the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and investigative judgment doctrine taught by EGW. We also see the triumphalistic attitude associated with this teaching. And here is the important point. The confusion of the SDA church regarding the gospel must be placed squarely upon Ellen G. White. This is not because she made no correct statements

³¹ J. David Newman, *Ministry*, 1992-10-6.

³² J. David Newman, *Ministry*, 1992-10-7.

on the gospel, it is because her writings contain *both* true and erroneous statements on this most important article of faith. It is the Historic Adventists, who continue to read the writings of EGW and hold these writings “as a continuing and authoritative source of truth,” who are not clear on the gospel. It is hard for Adventism to admit this, but *this is the root of its problem*. This root finds its branches in the main message of Adventism—the third angel’s message.

Our confusion arises because our church began with one audience while today we have two. Originally we preached to a mainly Christian audience [proselytizing other Christian groups who did not keep the Seventh-day Sabbath]....We must understand the difference between evangelism that has conversion as the goal and evangelism that brings spiritual growth and the acceptance of neglected truths, such as the Sabbath. We must determine which one of these goals is the need of the particular audience we are addressing.³³

Then, under the heading of “Our Mission,” Mr. Newman continues:

Revelation 14:6–12 is our charter, but we seem to major more on the message of the third angel (the mark of the beast) than on that of the first angel (the everlasting gospel).³⁴

It is my conclusion that the SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, which is fully supported by the writings of Ellen G. White, frequently perverts, distorts, and contradicts the new covenant gospel of grace.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 1992-10-8

Conclusion: Is the SDA church a cult?

Early Historic Adventism

I believe that *early* Historic Adventism³⁵ was at least cultic, if not fully a cult.³⁶

Contemporary Historic Adventism

Those in this wing of Adventism continue to cherish SDA history and do not see the glaring errors and contradictions that are so apparent to others. They accept the divine origin and authority of the writings of EGW and look forward—albeit with some latent fear—to the glorious consummation of the “third angel’s message.”³⁷ When they speak of the gospel going to all the world, it is in the context of the unique SDA message with its special, testing truths of the Sabbath, etc. The understanding of the gospel in this group is often muddled, compromised or misunderstood. I used to be in this group and it is hard for me to admit this, but I believe some, perhaps most, in this group meet numerous cult characteristics.

Evangelical Adventism

Evangelical Adventists should *not* be considered a cult. They do not see themselves as the only ones to be saved. Most see the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment as a doctrine that should be relegated to the historical junkyard and forgotten. Most believe

³⁵ By this term I mean the time between approximately 1844 and 1888.

³⁶ I encourage anyone who doubts this to read D.M. Canright, *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*. Canright was a contemporary of EGW, knew and worked with many of the early Adventist pioneers, and has much, well-documented material unknown to most Adventists today.

³⁷ I know because I was one.

in a “pre-advent judgment,” but upon questioning, they will admit that this has nothing to do with 1844. Most understand this “pre-advent judgment” to be a person’s response when confronted with the gospel. They believe in the Pauline gospel of justification by faith. Many in this wing of Adventism do not believe the seventh-day Sabbath is, or will be, the final test for all authentic Christians. Most do not believe Ellen White’s writings should be considered as authority for doctrine. Therefore, Evangelical Adventists should not be considered a cult. One wonders, however, upon what basis they can really be called Adventists. I found that they often disagree with a number of the *Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs*.

Liberal Adventism

It is beyond the scope of this book to do a thorough evaluation of Liberal Adventism. Certain Liberal Adventists, especially those in the Loma Linda area of California,³⁸ would freely admit that they do not believe in the substitutionary aspects of the atonement. For them, the blood of Christ means nothing to God and no longer serves as an adequate means for communicating the true character of God. Trusting God because of His character of love is, to them, the gospel. Often error is not in what one affirms, but in what one denies. If we applied Paul’s test in Galatians 1:8, 9 to Liberal Adventism, I believe we would find it to be “another gospel.”

³⁸ This observation comes from my own experience and from conversations with a number of Evangelical Adventist pastors.

Denominational Adventism

At the denominational level, the SDA church, like EGW, seems to speak out of both sides of its mouth. Granted, denominational leaders want to keep the various branches of Adventism under one organization; therefore, they must be pluralistic. Some might say the SDA church, *at the denominational level*, is cultic, for the following reasons:

- It continues to manifest many cult characteristics.
- It has never officially renounced the many erroneous statements in the early writings of Ellen White.
- It does not teach that the Scriptures are the “all sufficient” and “only” rule of faith.³⁹
- It continues to hold the writings of Ellen White as a “continuing and authoritative source of truth” in its *Fundamental Beliefs*.
- It continues to teach the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment as a biblical doctrine, although evidence to the contrary has been demonstrated time and again by the best minds in the Adventist church. This doctrine, as we have seen, contradicts, or at best compromises, the new covenant gospel of grace.
- It continues to claim to be the remnant church of Bible prophecy, when its scholars know that the key texts which are given to support this doctrine teach no such thing.⁴⁰

³⁹ In 1980 the SDA church at their General Conference in Dallas, Texas *took out* of their statement of *Fundamental Beliefs* these exact words.

⁴⁰ This has been admitted to me by several college professors and a number of Evangelical Adventist pastors in personal conversations.

- It continues to teach that the seventh-day Sabbath will be the final test for all last-day Christians, while the Bible makes it very clear that belief in Christ is the testing criteria.⁴¹
- The gospel is not always clearly taught.

The SDA denomination has come a long way, however, in discarding some of its historical errors. It now affirms the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and justification by faith.

In an article on Seventh-day Adventism published in 1956, [Walter] Martin considered four doctrines that Adventists were presumed to hold:

1. The atonement of Christ was not completed on the cross.
2. Salvation is the result of grace plus the works of the law.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ was a created being, not from all eternity.
4. Christ partook of man's sinful, fallen nature at the incarnation.⁴²

After considerable investigation He concluded that "to charge the majority of Adventists today with holding these heretical views is unfair, inaccurate, and decidedly unchristian!"⁴³ On the question of the eternity of Christ, Martin's assessment was probably accurate....*But on the other three topics, Martin's judgment was premature.* From the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* in 1957 until the 1980s, *the atonement, the incarnation, and the nature of salvation have been the subjects of constant debate.*

That Martin misjudged the measure of agreement within Adventism is undeniable. His mistake was to accept uncritically the arguments that were later published in *Questions on*

⁴¹ See Ratzlaff, Chapter 27, "The Testing Truth," in *Sabbath in Christ*.

⁴² Walter R. Martin, "Seventh-day Adventism Today," *Our Hope*, Nov. 1956, p. 275.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

*Doctrine.*⁴⁴ On the Adventist side, the dialogue with Martin and Barnhouse was viewed as an exercise in public relations. There was little attempt to give full weight to Adventist history, still less to consult the existing membership.⁴⁵

A word of caution

When evaluating Seventh-day Adventists, of whom there are millions, we should not make sweeping generalizations. I am often asked, “Do seventh-day Adventists have salvation?” The same question could be asked of any person of any denomination, and the answer should *always* be the same. Those who rely on the perfect life *of Christ* for *their* righteousness; who recognize that *Christ* died for *their* sin; who believe that *Christ* was raised from the dead for *their* justification; who believe that they are *now*, by faith, seated in heavenly places and are *already victorious in Christ Jesus*, have eternal life.

Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone. And those who are truly saved will, *from* a heart overflowing with gratitude and love for what God *has already* done for their justification, give themselves in service to God. They will obey God. They will do good works. They will love others as Christ loved them. However, and here is the important point, these good works in *no way whatever* enter into the foundation of their acceptance by God for salvation.

⁴⁴ It is of interest to recognize that *Questions on Doctrine* is no longer in print. Some see this as evidence that the denomination is retreating from the evangelical statements contained therein.

⁴⁵ Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, p. 69.

The intent of “Christian” cults is often to promote strict obedience to law.⁴⁶ This *at first* seems admirable. However, when this obedience becomes even a small part of the foundation for acceptance by God, as is the case with the Historic Adventist teaching of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, even if this obedience is coupled with faith in Christ, the gospel is compromised. One never knows when he has obeyed perfectly *enough*. Therefore, in order to have some assurance and some relief of conscience, certain human standards are inevitably set up as the accepted norm, and the way is opened for self-righteousness, legalism, and perfectionism as found in Historic Adventism.

On the other hand, one would, *at first*, think that the new covenant gospel of free grace would detract from obedience. Why should one obey when the obedience required for salvation has *already* been accomplished by Christ? However, when one accepts this free grace of God, a transformation takes place. The Christian becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. He no longer has to work *toward* salvation. Rather, accepting God’s verdict of “not guilty,” recognizing that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness,”⁴⁷ he now is set free to do good works from *no other motive* than that of love and gratitude.⁴⁸ Now, no longer is he concerned with providing enough obedience for acceptance by God, for that has already been imputed to him in Christ, who is seated at God’s right hand. Now his heart is broken and he can extend to others the same free grace and

⁴⁶ For Adventists this law is the old covenant law of the Ten Commandments, especially the Sabbath, belief in the non-immortality of the soul, the laws on clean and unclean meats, etc.

⁴⁷ Rom. 10:4.

⁴⁸ Unless it could be the motive of eternal rewards which has nothing to do with salvation.

love that have been extended to him in the gospel. Now, and only now, can he truly love others. Therefore, Jesus says:

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (Jn. 13:35).

Chapter Summary

1. There is only one true gospel.
2. Those who teach that salvation is a combination of faith *plus* works teach a false gospel and should be considered cultic, if not a cult.
3. Paul said that anyone, even an angel from heaven, who preached a gospel contrary to his gospel of justification by faith should be accursed.
4. The early writings of Ellen White in general, and her statements in connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment in particular, often—not always—teach a false gospel.
5. Ellen White has written many good things which are in harmony with the gospel and Scripture. However, one who claims to speak with the authority of God, as she does, should not have *any* statements which compromise the gospel.
6. Ellen White places her readers in an “either/or” stance with regard to her writings. She demands that her writings be accepted in total or rejected in total. She claims to have not written even one heretical sentence and says her testimonies are the words of God.
7. Early Historic Adventism bears the marks of a cult.
8. Contemporary Historic Adventism may be cultic, but not to the same degree as many other cults.

9. Evangelical Adventism should not be considered a cult. One wonders, however, if they should really be considered Adventists.
10. Liberal Adventism teaches another gospel, and for this reason might be considered cultic.
11. Denominational Adventism may be considered cultic for the following reasons:
 - a. It continues to manifest many cult characteristics.
 - b. It has never officially renounced the many erroneous statements in the early writings of Ellen White.
 - c. It does not teach that the Scriptures are the “all sufficient” and “only” rule of faith.
 - d. It continues to hold the writings of Ellen White as a “continuing and authoritative source of truth” in its *Fundamental Beliefs*.
 - e. It continues to teach the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment as a biblical doctrine, although evidence to the contrary has been demonstrated time and again by the best minds in the Adventist church. This doctrine, as we have seen, contradicts, or at best compromises, the new covenant gospel of grace.
 - f. It continues to claim to be the remnant church of Bible prophecy when its scholars know that the key texts which are given to support this doctrine teach no such thing.
 - g. It continues to teach that the seventh-day Sabbath will be the final test for all last-day Christians, while the Bible makes it very clear that belief in Christ is the true testing criteria.⁴⁹
 - h. The gospel is not always clearly taught.

⁴⁹ See Ratzlaff, Chapter 27, “The Testing Truth,” in *Sabbath in Christ*.

12. We should never judge whether one is saved or lost by denominational affiliation. Salvation is based upon an individual's acceptance of the free grace of God.

Therefore do not
fear them, for
there is nothing
covered that
will not be
revealed, and
hidden that will
not be known

Chapter 20



An Appeal

to SDA Leadership

This chapter is an open letter to Seventh-day Adventist denominational leaders. In this chapter I will give a brief summary of the conclusions we have reached, challenge SDA leaders to face squarely some difficult choices, and then give a gentle appeal for them to follow truth—regardless of the consequences.

Summary of our conclusions

Based upon the evidence already presented, it seems to me that the following summary statements are reasonable conclusions.

- The SDA church was born from the meltdown of Millerism—erroneous date-setting for the coming of Christ.¹
- Ellen White’s comprehensive endorsement of Miller’s erroneous methods of interpretation and his conclusions, bring her writings, visions, and claimed authority into question.²
- Many of the early errors of Adventism are based upon, or supported by, the writings of Ellen White.³
- When some of the early errors of Adventism became evident, including the errors in the visions of EGW, attempts were made to change, omit, or suppress them.⁴
- Ellen White has misinterpreted and misapplied Scripture on numerous occasions.⁵
- There is no biblical basis for the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.⁶
- The judgment in Daniel and Revelation is primarily a judgment of the wicked and not the saints.⁷
- Top denominational leaders and scholars in the SDA church have known of the exegetical problems associated with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and

¹ Review Chapter 4, “William Miller: His Methods and Message.”

² Review Chapter 3, “Ellen, God, and Miller.”

³ Review Chapters 5, “Right is Wrong and Wrong is Right”; 6, “Truth Changes Again”; and 7, “The Swinging Door.”

⁴ Review Chapter 8, “Another Door Opens—Quietly.”

⁵ Review Chapters 5–8.

⁶ That is unless one resorts to the allegorizing, proof-texting methods of Miller or uses *The Clear Word Bible*. Review Chapter 10, “A Broken Chain.”

⁷ Review Chapters 10, “A Broken Chain”; 4, “William Miller: His Methods and Message.”

- the investigative judgment and have been unable to adequately solve them.⁸
- The theology that springs from the investigative judgment is laden with serious errors.⁹
 - The teachings of the investigative judgment undermine the assurance of salvation and the joy of the gospel.¹⁰
 - Instead of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment leading to the vindication of God through the perfection of the “remnant,” it has been a breeding ground for all sorts of questionable ethics.¹¹
 - The believing Christian already has the verdict of “not guilty” in the new covenant truth of justification by faith.¹²
 - The investigative judgment is closely connected to the other unique aspects of SDA theology and mission.¹³
 - The SDA denomination still has certain cultic characteristics.¹⁴
 - The SDA denomination has given at least passive approval to *The Study Bible* which has as its stated purpose to combine the “inspired commentary” of the writings of Ellen White “with the Scriptures themselves.”¹⁵
 - The SDA denomination has given at least passive approval to *The Clear Word Bible*, which claims to be

⁸ Review Chapter 11, “Lumps Under the Rug.”

⁹ Review Chapter 12, “Is This Truth?”

¹⁰ Review Chapter 13, “Living Under Judgment.”

¹¹ Review Chapter 14, “We Knew It Was Wrong—But...”

¹² Review Chapters 15, “I’ve Been Acquitted”; and 18, “The Gospel Test.”

¹³ Review Chapter 16, “The Pillar.”

¹⁴ Review Chapter 17, “The Marks of a Cult.”

¹⁵ Review Ibid.

an accurate rendering of the original, but it has *doctrinally-biased additions* to the text at Daniel 8:12–14 as well as many other places. These additions have no support whatever in the original text, and make it appear that the investigative judgment is a biblical doctrine when it is not.¹⁶

- Historic Adventism, supported by the writings of Ellen White, taught, and perhaps still teaches, a “gospel” of faith, plus works, equals salvation. This is condemned in the strongest terms by the apostle Paul.¹⁷

Some penetrating questions for SDAs on the topic of the judgment

1. Do you still believe the investigative judgment is truly a biblical doctrine applicable for all Christians?
2. Why has not a full accounting of the Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel been *officially* made known to SDA church members at large?
3. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that the atonement will not be fully completed until after the close of the investigative judgment which you hold to be about the time of the second coming of Christ?
4. Do you still believe, as Crosier taught and as was supported by the visions and writings of Ellen White, that Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary for *the first time* in 1844?
5. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that the investigative judgment is a salvation judgment and will

¹⁶ Review Ibid.

¹⁷ Review Chapter 18, “The Gospel Test.”

be determined by confession of sin *and* perfection of character and/or the performance of “deeds”?^{18,19}

6. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, that the blotting out of sins does not take place at repentance and conversion, but at the close of the investigative judgment?
7. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught and as was shown to her in vision, that Crosier had the “true light” on the cleansing of the sanctuary, etc.?²⁰

If your answer is No, then why not repudiate the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investi-

¹⁸ “‘The dead were judged,’ says John, ‘out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’ Angels of God have kept a faithful record of the lives of all, and *they are to be judged according to their deeds*. In view of *this Judgment*, Peter exhorted the men of Israel: ‘Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.’” Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 308.

¹⁹ The EGW statement in the above footnote is a typical example of Ellen White’s obvious misuse of Scripture. She quotes Rev. 20:11, 12, which in context deals with the *wicked* in white throne judgment at the *close* of the thousand years, in support of the investigative judgment of the *righteousness* which Adventists say will *end* before the thousand years *starts*. She also uses Acts 3:19–21 in support of “this judgment.” If one were to accept this teaching as “inspired commentary” he would have to equate the outpouring of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost with the white throne judgment at the close of the thousand years and see both of these as referring to the investigative judgment which *started* in 1844.

²⁰ The “etc.,” shows that EGW also endorsed the other aspects of Crosier’s teachings.

gative judgment as error, or at least take it out of your statement of *Fundamental Beliefs*?

Some penetrating questions for SDAs regarding Ellen White

1. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that an angel from God guided William Miller in his study of the prophecies?
2. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that William Miller discovered a “perfect chain of truth”?
3. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that Miller’s 1843 chart which had *at least* six, if not fifteen, lines of “prophecy” pointing to 1843, was directed by God’s hand, and no part of it should be altered because the figures were just as God wanted them?
4. Do you still believe, as Ellen White was shown in vision, that God held His hand over the mistake in Miller’s chart and time reckoning?
5. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that pastors of Christian churches who rejected Miller’s 1843 message “had the blood of souls on them” and Jesus “turned his face from” those churches?
6. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that Miller’s 1843 message was “a saving message”?
7. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught and as she was shown in her first vision, that those who had accepted Miller’s message and then, after 1844 rejected it, were “left...in perfect darkness,” and it was “impossible” for them to get back on the path toward heaven?

8. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that the prayers of Christians who rejected the 1844 sanctuary message were “useless”?
9. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that “no sanctified tongue” will say, “I am saved”?
10. Do you still believe, as Ellen White taught, that the death of Christ on the cross did not *completely* vindicate God’s character of love and justice before the universe?

This list could be extended for many pages, but I think the point has been made. From an evangelical perspective, the teachings of Ellen White often appear to contain doctrinal errors which often contradict Scripture and undermine the gospel. In addition to this, the following quotation, written in 1856, should settle the issue of EGW’s prophetic authenticity.

I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel: “Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, *some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.*”²¹

Considering the above, it appears that Ellen White does *not* meet the biblical tests of a true prophet. All the people present at that gathering²² have been dead for many years.

But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, “How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?” When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The

²¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 131.

²² This conference took place May 27, 1856. See *Ibid.*, p. 127.

prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him (Deut. 18:20–22).

When the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then that prophet will be known as one whom the LORD has truly sent (Jer. 28:9).

So we ask, do you still believe the writings of Ellen White are an “inspired commentary” and “a continuing and authoritative source of truth”?

If your answer is, No, then why not repudiate the many errors in the writings of Ellen White or at least remove her writings as “a continuing and authoritative source of truth” from your statement of *Fundamental Beliefs*?

The author sent the following registered letter to the then president of the General Conference just before the second printing of *Cultic Doctrine*.

May 1, 1997

Robert S. Folkenberg,
President of the General Conference of SDAs
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Elder Folkenberg,

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to read this letter. I was a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist who believed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God’s true, remnant church of Bible prophecy. I read most, if not all, of Ellen White’s then published writings and believed her to be a true messenger of God, inspired to prepare a people to stand in the great day of Christ’s coming. I attended SDA schools from first grade through the seminary.

I left the SDA ministry when I could no longer support the investigative judgment. I did this only after considerable Bible study, prayer, and discussion with top SDA scholars who

privately admitted that the investigative judgment was an unbiblical doctrine.

I sent you two books by registered mail about eight months ago. They were entitled, *Sabbath in Crisis* and *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists: An Evangelical Resource, An Appeal to SDA Leadership*. The White Estate has purchased a number of copies of *Cultic Doctrine*, and a few copies of *Sabbath in Crisis*. Many other SDA entities have also purchased these books. Some SDA pastors are privately recommending them to their church members. In fact many thousands of these books have now been sold and I am about to reprint them again. I get many inquiries from readers who ask me what the response has been from SDA leadership. To date I have received no response. I would like to include your response, or at least a summary of it, in the next printing.

So that I might represent Adventism correctly, I am requesting that you give me a response to the questions in *Cultic Doctrine* (See Chapter 20). I am also asking for a response to several other questions listed below. Many questions can be answered by a simple “Yes” or “No”.

1. Does the Seventh-day Adventist church still hold the following Fundamental Beliefs as printed in your 1996 Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook?:
No. 12, The Remnant and Its Mission
No. 17, The Gift of Prophecy
No. 19, The Sabbath
No. 23, Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary
No. 25, Death and Resurrection
2. Does a pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church have to agree with all 27 of the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists to be in good and regular standing?
3. If a pastor does not have to agree with all 27 of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with how many could he disagree and still continue to pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination?

4. Are there certain Fundamental Beliefs that are non-negotiable, with which a SDA pastor must agree in order for him to be in good and regular standing? If so, which ones would they be?
5. If a SDA pastor disagreed with all five of the Fundamental Beliefs mentioned above in question 1, would, or should, he still be considered an “Adventist” pastor?
6. Are there different requirements for adherence to the 27 Fundamental Beliefs for pastors and church members? If so, please explain.
7. Is there any expectation that any of the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists will be changed in the near future (1-3 years)? If so, please explain.

Elder Folkenberg, I know you must know the facts. Many things Adventists originally believed are in error. Yet the Adventist church in its Revelation Seminars continues to teach things its scholars know to be false. I appeal to you to follow the steps of others who have been forthright with the truth. Why not follow in the footsteps of the reformers who were willing to stand for truth regardless of what happened. Why not follow the example of recent changes in the Worldwide Church of God. They have publicly admitted to past error. They have helped their church members see the far-reaching claims and results of a correct understanding of the gospel. True, many have not understood. True, many have broken away. True, the same would happen in Adventism. Is not truth more valuable than numbers, money and power? I have personally spoken with a number of SDA pastors who privately admit that the SDA church is wrong in several of its Fundamental Beliefs. They are working, as they feel it is safe, to change the church from the inside. They have expressed appreciation to me for my work on the outside. They hope and pray that the SDA church will admit to past errors and become a truly biblically based church. I appeal to you to carefully and prayerfully study the two books that were sent to you. Thank you for responding to this letter. I do want to be honest in my evaluation of Adventism. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or write.

In His joy,
Dale Ratzlaff

Some weeks later I received a letter from one of the Assistants to the President. He said that Elder Folkenberg did not have time to respond to my letter and it was well known what Adventists believe.

Personal reflections

As a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist, I grew up with the full belief that the SDA church was, indeed, God's only, true, remnant church. Searching for and living the truth was, I thought, the very heart-throb of Seventh-day Adventism. It came as a shock to me to learn otherwise. I vividly remember the months of anguish I had as I wrestled with the facts. I loved the writings of EGW, even if there were some things I could not reconcile. I loved SDA history and often marveled at the teaching of how God led this little band of Adventists to discover "special truths" for the last days. The future destiny of SDAs always was a challenge to my imagination. I saw myself a loyal Adventist to the end, willing, if God so intended, to give my life, loyally keeping the Sabbath.

Then, I discovered the investigative judgment was not a biblical doctrine, that it contradicted Scripture and undermined the gospel. About that same time I received hard evidence that Ellen White had copied profusely, even when she denied it, even transferring the errors from the books from which she copied. This was a terrible shock. I did not leave the SDA church without serious study.

Now, twenty-two years later, it seems obvious that SDA leaders know the facts. It also appears that there is still an unwillingness to admit the errors of early Adventism.

The Adventist opportunity and dilemma

I am sure SDA leaders face many dilemmas. It would not be easy to discard the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment because it is intertwined so tightly with nearly everything in Historic Adventism. Were denominational leaders to do this, doubtless many Historic Adventists would form splinter, reform groups, claiming that mainstream Adventism had left the “blueprint”²³ and had gone into apostasy.

Recently the Worldwide Church of God faced a similar challenge. They had been considered a “Christian cult” by most evangelicals. However, their leadership, knowing what it could cost them, decided to follow truth, whatever the cost. They publicly changed their beliefs on a number of important doctrines. They moved away from erroneous beliefs toward mainstream Christianity. They have dropped their strong, old covenant focus and now teach the new covenant gospel of grace. They have changed their understanding of the Holy Spirit and their doctrine of Christ. They no longer require the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath or the yearly feast days. They may not yet be quite in the middle of mainstream evangelicalism, but they are certainly rapidly moving in that direction.

This change in doctrine cost them dearly. They lost approximately forty percent of their pastors and thirty percent of their members, to say nothing about income. Today, however, those who are left are following Christ and are rejoicing in the new covenant gospel of grace.²⁴

²³ A term well known in Historic Adventism as referring to the writings of Ellen White.

²⁴ I have personally talked with several top denominational leaders, a large number of pastors, and many hundreds of members in the Worldwide Church of God. I have been very encouraged with the sincerity

Jesus is our example when it comes to standing for truth. Even when the crowds were large, Jesus would not compromise truth for the sake of numbers. Standing for truth cost Him dearly. Many of His followers left²⁵ and then there was the cost of the cross.

When it comes to change, SDA leaders could stand in the tradition of the early pioneers of Adventism. They, too, as we have seen, changed their understanding of truth on more than one occasion. As one studies the writings of EGW it is evident that she, too, changed her beliefs. To her credit, unlike many other “prophets” of her day, her change in doctrine was usually²⁶ toward mainstream Christianity. True, neither the Adventist church nor EGW have been as open to admitting past errors as many would like, but what an opportunity the SDA church has now. Why not follow truth, no matter what the cost?

The SDA church should not be evaluated today on the basis of what it was many years ago, but on its current beliefs and practices. And here is the Adventist opportunity and dilemma. It appears to me that there are many in the denomination who are changing and want more change. However, they do not want to openly repudiate past errors. For example, Roy Adams in his book, *The Sanctuary, the Heart of Adventist Theology*, makes a number of conces-

and the desire to follow truth, regardless of the cost, manifested in nearly every conversation.

²⁵ “As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore.” (Jn. 6:66).

²⁶ Not always, as in her first visions where she “shut the door” again. However, in her understanding of the gospel, the deity of Christ, the sinless nature of Christ, etc., her change in belief was in the direction of mainstream Christianity.

sions,²⁷ but then does some fancy footwork to show that this in no way alters a single plank of the basic pillars of the Adventist faith.²⁸ It seems illogical to me to affirm two or more positions which are fundamentally contradictory.

Some Adventists have made a progression from the investigative judgment to the “two-apartment” ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary to the “two phase” ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary, to the “pre-advent judgment” (post 1844 investigative judgment context) to the “pre-advent judgment” (acceptance of the gospel, 1844 is irrelevant context). Often this is done under the dynamic of “progressive revelation.” A careful evaluation of this progression of belief will show that the first and last are contradictory to each other and one does not spring from the other. It is like the continuum of black to white in small increments, mentioned in chapter two. Black is not white no matter how many varying sheds of gray connect the two. Neither is error truth no matter how many incremental steps are made in trying to rename error into truth.

I was amazed at the comments of many of the Adventist pastors, even the Evangelical Adventists, who read the first draft of this manuscript. Some repudiated the errors of Ellen White’s early shut-door statements, perversion of the gospel statements, etc., yet they continue to hold EGW as an inspired prophet. Their reasoning was simply “progressive revelation.” However, two contrary positions cannot both be true. If I understand progressive revelation correctly, a new revelation of truth does not contradict the first revelation of truth. It may add new insights, facts and

²⁷ A.F. Ballenger’s contribution to truth, p. 86; Sins, not blood, defile the sanctuary, p. 87; and a number of others.

²⁸ “...without altering a single plank of the basic pillars of the faith, we do indeed perceive a clearer vision.” Adams, *The Sanctuary*, p. 113.

understanding, but the first revelation of truth fits into the bigger picture of truth without being contradictory.

Therefore, *it seems to me that the only way Adventists can really “come clean” and move into mainstream evangelicalism is to openly repudiate the early errors of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment and to drop the writings of Ellen White as a source of authority.*

A humble appeal—why not seize the moment?

Is it too much to hope that SDA leaders will someday cut Adventism loose from the errors of Millerism and the errors in the writings of Ellen White? Why not cut out the “sliver” of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, *even if* it hurts and the costs are high? Why not determine to be true to the new covenant gospel of grace and the word of God *alone*? Why not set the Adventist church free—free to do good works which come as a *natural* result of knowing that God has *already* given the believing Christian the verdict of “not guilty” in Christ Jesus?

I know the Adventist church sees itself as “the remnant.” However, it appears to me this claim is not founded on sound biblical interpretation. I know it would be a terrible shock to many Historic Adventists to realize that the SDA church was not, and is not, *the* remnant church. If, however, the Adventist church were to cut itself loose from the errors of the past, it would *then*, truly, be *a part* of the remnant—all true believers in Christ.

At times what I have said in this book has probably cut until it hurt. Doubtless, some have drawn back at the cutting knife as I did when the old country doctor tried to find the sliver in my foot. I have cut, not with the intention of

causing pain, but with the hope that the cut would be deep enough to remove the sliver. How wonderful it would be to see the SDA church running free—free from the crippling sliver, the encumbrance of past error!

“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:31–32).

It is my sincere prayer and hope that this book may in some small way nudge the Seventh-day Adventist church toward mainstream evangelicalism.

Appendix A

Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists

(Revised in 1980 and current in 2003)

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teachings of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.

1. The Holy Scriptures: The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this World, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revelation of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5,6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)

2. The Trinity: There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:6-4; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)

3. The Father: God the Eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness; the qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex 34:6,7; John 14:9.)

4. The Son: God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was

conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

5. The Holy Spirit: God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in the incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1,2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11,12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13.)

6. Creation: God is the Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made "the heaven and the earth" and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was "very good.," declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1, 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)

7. The Nature of Man: Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind and soul, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen, nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But in God Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and

one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15.)

8. The Great Controversy: All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this would become the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6-8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

9. The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ: In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (John 3:16; Isa. 53; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6-11.)

10. The Experience of Salvation: In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the

Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10.)

11. The Church: The Church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word, the church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen. 12:3; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11-15; 3:8-11; Matt. 28:19, 20; 16:13-20; 18:18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1:22, 23; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18.)

12. The Remnant: The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-14.)

13. Unity in the Body of Christ: The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In

Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Throughout the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27, 29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23.)

14. Baptism: By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13; Acts 16:30-33; 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 28:19, 20.)

15. The Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Matt. 26:17-30; Rev. 3:20; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17.)

16. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries: God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and

self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teachings ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:9-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8; 11-16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

17. The Gift of Prophecy: One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28; 29; Acts. 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.)

18. The Law of God: The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with his people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow men. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Ex. 20:1-17; Ps. 40:7, 8; Matt. 22:36-40; Deut. 28:1-14; Matt. 5:17-20; Heb. 8:8-10; John 16:7-10; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:3; Rom. 8:3, 4; Ps. 19:7-17.)

19. The Sabbath: The Beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath as a day of rest, worship and ministry in harmony with the teachings and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of de-

lightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Isa. 56:5; 6; 58:13, 14; Matt. 12:1-12; Ex. 31:13-17; Eze. 20:12, 20; Deut. 5:12-15; Heb. 4:1-11; Lev. 23:23; Mark 1:32.)

20. Stewardship: We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for the nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Hag. 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Rom. 15:26-27.)

21. Christian Behavior: We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness. (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:6; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; Lev. 11:1-47; 3 John 2.)

22. Marriage and Family: Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; Matt. 5:31, 32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6.)

23. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary: There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to the heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have a part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who, among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It de-

clares that those who have remained loyal to God will receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

24. The Second Coming of Christ: The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 26:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.)

25. Death and Resurrection: The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10.)

26. The Millennium and the End of Sin: The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.)

27. The New Earth: On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death

will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15.)

Appendix B

Questionable Statements by Ellen G. White

Acquired physical characteristics become genetic

By lacing, the internal organs of women are crowded out of their positions....These fashionably dressed women cannot transmit good constitutions to their children. Some women have naturally *small waists*. But rather than regard such forms as beautiful, they should be viewed as *defective*. These wasp waists may have been *transmitted to them from their mothers, as the result of their indulgence in the sinful practice of tight-lacing*, and in consequence of imperfect breathing. Poor children born of these miserable slaves of fashion have diminished vitality, and are predisposed to take on disease. The impurities retained in the system in consequence of imperfect breathing are transmitted to their offspring.¹

“But my waist is naturally slender,” says one woman. She means that she has inherited small lungs. *Her ancestors*, more or less of them, compressed their lungs in the same way that we do, and it has become in her case a *congenital deformity*.²

Tight lacing causes lung protrusions in the neck

At the hotel, “DIEU,” the great hospital at Paris, a young girl of eighteen lately presented herself to Breschet for his advice. On the right side of her throat, she had a tumor of variable size, but never larger than one’s fist. It reached from the collar-bone as high as the thyroid cartilage. When pressed downward, it wholly disappeared; but as soon as the pressure was removed, it was indolent, soft, and elastic. It was observed to be the largest when the chest was tightly laced with corsets. In short, by placing the ear on it the murmur of respiration could be heard in the tumor, which proves that a protrusion of the lungs had taken place, or, in other words, that the poor girl had been laced so tightly that

¹ Ellen G. White, *Health Reformer*, 1871-11-01.

² *Ibid.*, 1871-10-31.

her lungs, having to longer sufficient space in their natural position, were squeezed out of it, and were forcing their way up along the neck.³

The brain contains animal organs, wigs cause recklessness in morals

The artificial hair and pads covering the base of the brain heat and excite the spinal nerves centering in the brain. The head should ever be kept cool. The heat caused by these artificial coverings induces the blood to the brain. The action of the blood upon the lower or *animal organs* of the brain, causes unnatural activity, *tends to recklessness in morals*, and the mind and heart are in danger of being corrupted.⁴

Babies who nurse from others will inherit the wet-nurse's morals

Mothers sometimes depend upon a hireling....A stranger performs the duties of the mother, and gives from her breast the food to sustain life. Nor is this all. *She also imparts her temper and her temperament to the nursing child.* The child's life is linked to hers. If the hireling is a coarse type of woman, passionate and unreasonable; if she is not careful in her morals, the nursling will be, in all probability, of the same or similar type. The same quality of blood coursing in the veins of the hireling nurse is in that of the child.⁵

Ankles must not be exposed to the sight of men

It is a common thing to see the dress raised one-half of a yard, exposing an almost unclad ankle to the sight of gentlemen, but no one seems to blush at this immodest exposure. No one's sensitive modesty seems shocked for the reason that this is customary. It is fashion, and for this reason it is endured. No outcry of immodesty is heard, although it is so in the fullest sense.⁶

³ Ibid., 1871-12-01.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Healthful Living*, p. 185.

⁵ Ibid., p. 145.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Health Reformer*, 1872-05-01.

Sexual union between man and beast is evident in certain races of men

Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation [sexual union], were destroyed by the flood. Since the flood there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals, and *in certain races of men*.⁷

Earthquakes and Volcanoes caused by coal and oil burning beneath the surface

At this time [after the flood] immense forests were buried. These have since been changed to coal, forming the extensive coal beds that now exist, and also yielding large quantities of oil. The coal and oil frequently ignite and burn beneath the surface of the earth. Thus rocks are heated, limestone is burned, and iron ore melted. The action of the water upon the lime adds fury to the intense heat, and causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues.

Ellen G. White statements that appear to contradict the Bible

When was the plan of salvation made?

EGW: The kingdom of grace was instituted *immediately after the fall of man*, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race. It then existed in the purpose and by the promise of God; and through faith, men could become its subjects. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ.⁸

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3, p. 75. See also, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3, p. 64, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1, p. 69, 78.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 1888 edition, p. 347. See also *Early Writings*, pp. 126, 149–151.

Bible: Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus *from all eternity* (2 Tim. 1:9).

Just as He chose us in Him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will (Eph. 1:4, 5).

Was Adam deceived?

EGW: Eve yielded to temptation, and through her influence *Adam also was deceived*.⁹

Bible: And *it was not Adam who was deceived*, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression (1 Tim. 2:14).

Are sin or trespass offerings still to be made by Christians?

EGW: You could at least have made efforts to correct your acts of injustice to your fellow men. You cannot make every case right, for some whom you have injured have gone into their graves, and the account stands registered against you. In these cases the best you can do is to bring *a trespass offering* to the altar of the Lord, and He will accept and *pardon* you.¹⁰

Should all whom God has prospered with earth's riches carry out His plan by faithfully giving a tenth of all their increase, and should they not withhold their *trespass offerings* and their thank offerings, the treasury would be constantly replenished.^{11,12}

But there has been a great neglect of duty. Many have withheld means which God claims as His, and in so doing they have committed robbery toward God. Their selfish hearts have not given the tenth of all their increase, which God claims. Neither have they come up to the

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, 352.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 339. See also Vol. 5, p. 150,

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 408.

¹² It should be noted that "trespass offerings" cannot be interpreted here to refer to thank offerings as these are mentioned separately.

yearly gatherings with their freewill offerings, their thank offerings, and *their trespass offerings*.¹³

All our blessings come from His bountiful hand. In turn, He would have men and women show their gratitude by returning Him a portion in tithes and offerings—in thank offerings, in freewill offerings, in *trespass offerings*. Should means flow into the treasury in accordance with this *divinely appointed plan*,—a tenth of all the increase, and liberal offerings,—there would be an abundance for the advancement of the Lord's work.¹⁴

Dear sisters, shall this order of things continue; or will you resolve to put off your ornaments, and turn your attention fully to seeking the Lord? Bring in your *trespass-offerings*, your thank-offerings, and your freewill-offerings; humble your hearts before the Lord, *and he will be found ever ready to receive and pardon*.¹⁵

Bible: He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time... (Heb. 10:12).

Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin (Heb. 10:18).

Is there more than one gospel?

EGW: The *gospel of health* is to be firmly linked with the ministry of the word. It is the Lord's design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message.¹⁶

Those who teach the principles of health reform should be intelligent in regard to disease and its causes, understanding that every action of the human agent should be in perfect harmony with the laws of life. The light God has given on *health reform is for our salvation and the salvation of the world*.¹⁷

¹³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 510.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 75.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1880-07-08.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 75.

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, p. 136.

Bible: But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:8).

What is the seal of God for the Christian?

EGW: The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the *observance of the seventh-day Sabbath*, the Lord's memorial of creation.¹⁸

Bible: And do not grieve the *Holy Spirit* of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30. See also 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13).

When did Satan tempt Christ?

EGW: *As soon as Christ's long fast commenced*, he was at hand with this temptations. He came clothed in light, claiming to be an angel sent from the throne of God to sympathize with Christ and relieve him from his suffering condition. He represented to him that God did not desire him to pass through the pain and self-denial which he had anticipated. He claimed to bear the message from Heaven that God only designed to prove the willingness of Christ to endure his test.¹⁹

Bible: And *after* He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He *then* became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Mt. 4:2–3).

Can we freely pray for the sick?

EGW: Under the heading, "Prayer for the Sick" we find this statement: We should first find out if the sick one has been withholding tithes or has made trouble in the church.²⁰

Bible: And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill (Mt. 8:16).

¹⁸ Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 117.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 2, p. 89.

²⁰ Ellen G. White, *Healthful Living*, p. 237.

Is it all right to pray standing up?

EGW: Where have our brethren obtained the idea that they should stand upon their feet when praying to God? One who has been educated for about five years in Battle Creek was asked to lead in prayer before Sister White should speak to the people. But as I beheld him standing upright upon his feet while his lips were about to open in prayer to God, my soul was stirred within me to give him an open rebuke. Calling him by name, I said, “Get down upon your knees.” This is the proper position *always*.

Bible: And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions (Mk. 11:25).

Is vegetarianism required of God’s people?

EGW: Those who have received instruction regarding the evils of the use of flesh foods...will not continue to indulge their appetite for food that they know to be unhealthful. God demands that the appetite be cleansed. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people.²¹

Bible: But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods [meats], which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth (1 Tim. 4:1–3).

Can Christian ministers eat meat?

EGW: Let not any of our ministers set an evil example in the eating of flesh meat. Let them and their families live up to the light of health reform.²²

Bible: And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Pass-over [lamb] with you before I suffer” (Lk. 22:15).

²¹ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 36.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 399.

Is a Christian under condemnation if he eats meat?

EGW: At the time the light on health reform dawned upon us, and since that time, the questions have come home every day. “Am I practicing temperance in all things?” “Is my diet such as will bring me in a position where I can accomplish the greatest amount of good?” If we cannot answer these questions in the affirmative, *we stand condemned before God*, for he will hold us all responsible for the light which has shone upon our path...²³

Bible: There is therefore now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1).

Will eating eggs hinder our prayers?

EGW: You place upon your tables butter, eggs, and meat, and your children partake of them. They are fed with the very things that will excite their animal passions, and then you come to meeting and ask God to bless and save your children. How high do your prayers go?²⁴

Bible: Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give *good gifts* to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? (Lk. 11:11–13).

²³ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 366.

Appendix C

Ellen G. White Bibliography

I have not listed the publisher for the Ellen G. White books as this information has little practical use. Her books are sold at Adventist Book Centers throughout the U.S. People wishing to purchase her books may call any SDA church for referral to the nearest Adventist Book Center. For a complete listing of periodicals in which are found articles by EGW and a complete listing of EGW pamphlets, contact the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD, 20904-6600.

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